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The Incredible Headless Anchorwoman

JAMES FALLOWS: NIXON'S VIETNAM • WE BOMBED IN PHILADELPHIA

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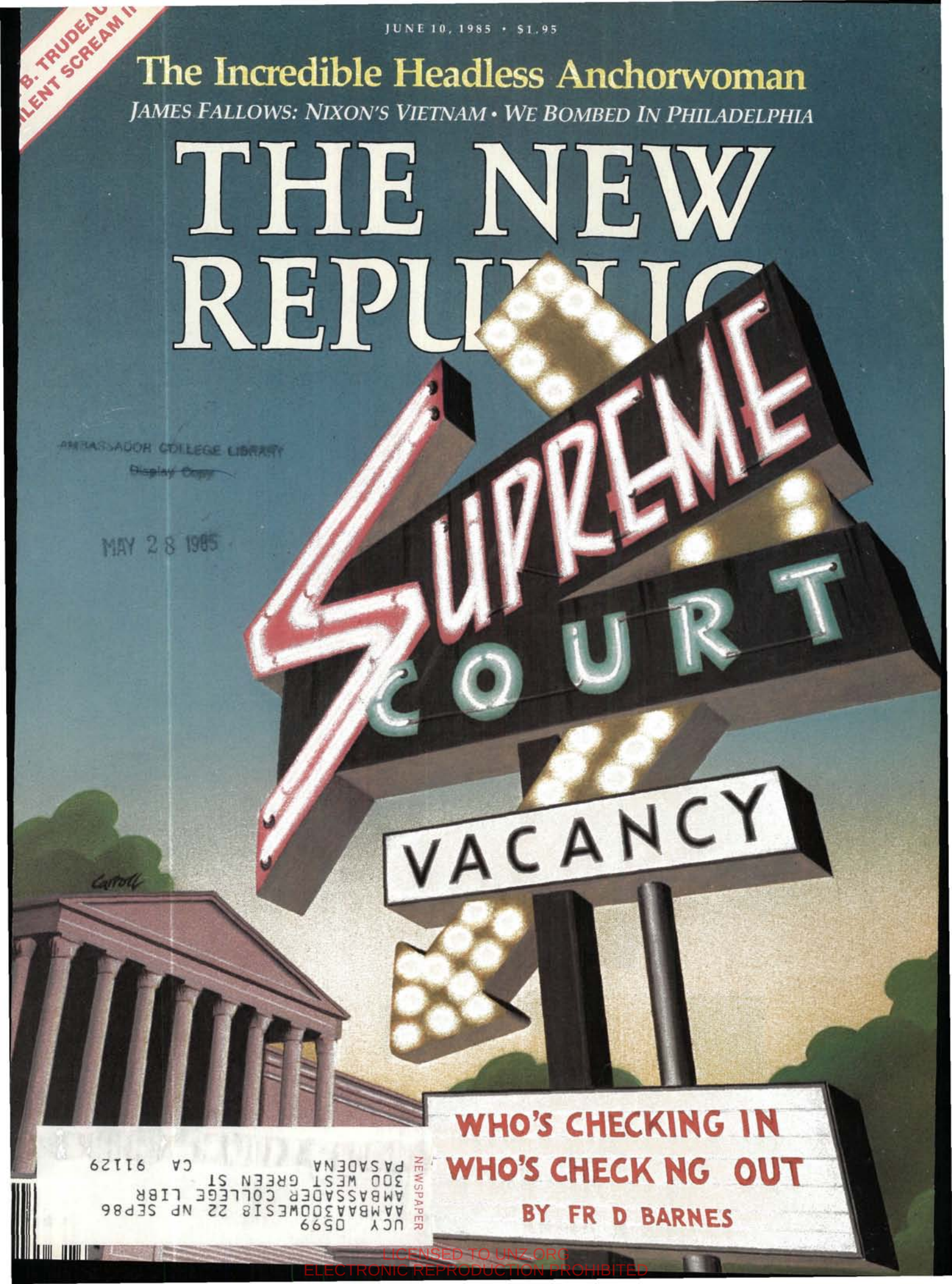

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But only your doctor can make it. And remember, if you are over 40 and overweight, or have diabetes in your family, you should have regular blood and urine tests. Early diagnosis in adults can lead to better management and fewer problems later on.

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FOUNDED 1914 — *A Weekly Journal of Opinion* — ISSUE 3,673

WASHINGTON, D.C. — JUNE 10, 1985

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 192, Number 23, Issue 3,673, June 10, 1985. (Printed on May 22, 1985.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 7 & 14, July 15 & 22, Aug. 12 & 19, and Sept. 16 & 23, 1985) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $48; foreign, $73; Canada, $60. Back issues, $2.50 (includes postage & handling). ©1985 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. **Subscribers:** Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to **Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 955, Farmingdale, NY 11737-0001.** For subscription problems call **800-645-9559** (In N.Y. State call 800-732-9119).

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FROM WASHINGTON

TAX REFORM, TAKE TWO

"Damn it, I don't want to look like I'm favoring the rich," *Newsweek* quotes President Reagan as saying about his revised tax reform plan, to be unveiled officially May 28. But that's exactly what advance reports of the changes he's made in the original Treasury proposal of last November make him look like. And this offers Democrats their only hope of undoing the harm they did themselves by letting Reagan steal the tax reform issue that once belonged to them.

Despite seemingly progressive rates, what Reagan has produced is virtually a flat tax. Families making under $30,000 would pay a marginal rate of 22 percent: 15 percent for the income tax and seven percent for Social Security. Since the Social Security tax disappears at $40,000, the marginal tax rate on families making up to $75,000 would be barely higher: 25 percent. Incomes over $75,000 would be taxed at 35 percent, but Reagan has reintroduced the special break for capital gains (which Treasury I would have eliminated). Capital gains are heavily concentrated among high-income people, and would be taxed at a maximum of only 17.5 percent—less than the very lowest rate on wage income.

Level rates wouldn't be so bad if Reagan had retained Treasury I's commitment to wiping out special breaks for better-off people. *The New York Times* grandiosely describes the revised plan as emerging from "a philosophical struggle" within the administration. It "sacrifices some of the equity proposed in the original plan for another objective—the stimulation of economic growth." This is baloney. In any other context, Reaganites snort at the idea that special favors from the government can stimulate economic growth. Treasury I accurately described current law as "an elaborate series of tax incentives for particular businesses and investments," which "impede the efficiency of an economy based on free-market principles" and amount to an "undeclared government industrial policy." Treasury II restores some of the worst of these special breaks, not because of true concern for the economy, but because Reagan buckled under—Mondale-like—to Republican interest groups.

Some comparisons between Treasury I and Treasury II give the flavor of Reagan's sellout. The revised version is both less fair *and* less efficient. Treasury I would have taxed employer-paid health insurance premiums over $175 a month. The purpose was to encourage health cost control by ending the government subsidy for especially lavish plans. Most of the burden would have fallen on the top fifth of taxpayers. Treasury II taxes employer-paid health insurance premiums *up to* $25 a month. This will hit all workers with a health plan, no matter how modest their incomes. The more lavish the plan, the less it will be affected, so there will be no incentive for greater efficiency.

Treasury I proposed doubling the personal exemption from $1,040 to $2,000, a break most of all for the working poor, and lowering the corporate income tax rate from 46 percent to 33 percent. To help pay for some of the corporate breaks he has restored in the revised plan, Reagan considered "phasing in" the general corporate tax cut over several years. But he ultimately decided to slash corporate taxes immediately and phase in the personal exemption boost instead, starting at $1,500. Considering inflation, this will leave the personal exemption no larger than it was in 1978. But each $100 a year the personal exemption isn't raised saves five billion dollars that can pay for restoring those business favors.

Two items in Treasury I that generat-

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CORRESPONDENCE

DISTORTING VIETNAM?

To the editors:
Many of us have come to the conclusion that the Vietnam War was not as morally clear-cut as it seemed in our younger days. Over and over in your Vietnam essays (Special Issue, April 29), one hears variations of the conclusion that the Vietnam War was immoral not necessarily in principle, but because in its social-historical context it was unwinnable. I believe what liberals now need to do is not so much to rehash Vietnam as to finally decide about the Korean War.

South Koreans have a society that, if not perfect, is certainly much different from what their northern cousins enjoy. The existence and legitimacy of South Korean society derives from the "winnable" nature of the conflict—which is to say that a defensible and stable frontier could be established before the American public grew tired of paying the price. It was close, but the southerners made it. Seoul can be its own city, while Saigon still wears an aura not unlike that of Paris during the years 1940-44.

Could any of this have something to do with the fact that Korea is an unforested peninsula, well suited to the exercise of American naval and air power? The Korean War was a practical one to win. It should be obvious that what is practical has now come to be our measure of what is moral. TRB asserts ("The Reagahnev Doctrine," April 29) that overthrowing the Sandinistas for "mere" geopolitical reasons is not a morally adequate justification. However, if the curve of a coastline, or the density of foliage, is to determine whether some people live in freedom and others in slavery, it would seem that "mere" geography or strategic advantage can be pretty important indeed.

What are our fabled consciences worth if we only want to get involved in fights we think we can win? If a principle is worth even one human life, it's worth them all.

MICHAEL L. COOK
Miles City, Montana

To the editor:
Colonel Harry G. Summers's analysis of what went wrong in Vietnam ("How We Lost," April 29) is proven foolish by his own examples. His theory is that our chief mistake was making judgments on the basis of statistics (such as those on enemy troop strength). Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant, Summers argues, were great generals because their will to win was not diminished by their concern for mere statistics.

But in fact, General Lee could have saved our nation a great deal of bloodshed if he'd begun by concentrating on the reality of the Union's potential troop strength; and as for Grant, he won—in no small part—because the statistics were on his side.

To be sure, few aspects of life are adequately comprehended merely by a statistical analysis. The wise strategist will supplement such information; but only at his peril will he ignore or falsify it.

RICHARD JOFFE
Osan Air Base, Korea

To the editors:
This great nation of ours tormented the Vietnamese for 20 years, killed men, women, and children, ruined their crops, destroyed their homes, devastated their environment, and accomplished absolutely nothing. Now we're having an identity crisis.

ROBERT COVELLI
New Castle, Delaware

SMOKE JOKE

To the editors:
Thank you for printing the hilarious advertisement titled "Smokers Get A Raw Deal" (inside back cover, May 6). Had it appeared in a humor magazine it would have been recognized as a brilliant parody of the spate of right-wing polemics being run as advertisements; as a serious ad, it is self-parody of the highest order. Equating smokers with victims of racial discrimination! Suggesting that a transit policeman shot a man for smoking! I laughed and laughed: smoking is a "basic freedom" that is under attack from the "social engineers" who inflict "virtually unenforceable laws" on the proud "50 million American smokers." (Unenforceable laws are the most repressive, as we all know.) And the tag line, which put me on the floor: "Presented in the public interest. . . ."

I'll never be able to read another "public interest" ad with a straight face again.

VIC WALTON
Santa Barbara, California

CONTRA WHAT?

To the editors:
I find it very ironic that the National Pro-Life Political Action Committee and the Moral Majority are in support of Roberto d'Aubuisson (" 'Mi Asesino,' The Freedom Fighter," April 15). I am quite taken aback that two groups which I staunchly disagree with on the issue of abortion or, as they say, saving lives, I also disagree with for supporting the supposed leader of death squads, one who goes about ending lives. Why is it that these two groups care so much about bringing innocents into this world and at the same time support a man who removes them from that world through violent means and intents? When will they fight for a cause that is *really* pro-life?

BROOKE MAGID HART
Asuncion, Paraguay

AIR SQUATTERS' RIGHTS

To the editors:
TRB's proposal ("Political Property Rights," April 8) to recognize the squatters' rights of tenants living in rent-controlled apartments, and make them salable, is identical in principle to a proposal before a reluctant Federal Aviation Administration to do the same thing with takeoff and landing slots at congested airports.

It would be better if we auctioned off those slots, so that the public collected the rents. But just conferring ownership on the present airline tenants would be an enormous improvement. Many carriers today say they feel compelled to use their slots, even if for marginal purposes, for fear of losing them. If they could sell them, it would ensure their most efficient possible use.

Airport congestion is a simple problem of demand outrunning supply. Part of the cure has got to be on the supply side: we need additional airport and air traffic control capacity. But the other part is to restrict demand. One way to do this is simple first come, first served; this is both inefficient and terribly annoying. The second is rationing by either the airlines in concert or the FAA itself. That's a cartelist's dream. The final way is to use the market; it's by far the most efficient way we

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JUNE 10, 1985

GOOD NEWS FROM EL SALVADOR

Remember El Salvador? It's that other country you used to hear about back when America's problem was Central America, not just Nicaragua. The country is still trapped in a bloody civil war from which there seems to be no easy escape, but there is also good news: the success of President José Napoleón Duarte and his Christian Democratic Party. Contrary to predictions that the right-wing Arena party of Roberto d'Aubuisson would win, the Christian Democrats swept last March's elections for legislative and municipal offices. This surprising outcome was made even more gratifying by the fact that the Salvadoran military supported it. D'Aubuisson cried fraud and demanded that the results be thrown out. The military high command assembled in San Salvador and said, indignantly, that the results should stand. President Duarte may be forgiven if he treated his visit to the U.S. last week as something of a victory tour.

The persistence of El Salvador's center says something surprising, and important, about revolutions in the Third World. Ever since the U.S. failed to find a democratic alternative in Vietnam, we have been hearing from both the right and the left that there is no center, or "third force," anywhere. America is supposedly fated to face a single choice in guerrilla wars: either "getting on the right side of history," or joining forces with rightists in the twilight struggle. Many liberals argued that, philosophically and politically, more congenial options for American foreign policy remained. What hobbled their argument was the absence of any historical examples to justify their hopes. In too many of the world's socially unstable but strategically critical places, the extremes seemed all we had. Now there is Raúl Alfonsín in Argentina, and Duarte in El Salvador, centrists both, anti-communists who insist on social justice as well as geopolitical strength.

To be sure, Duarte has not reached his present position because the United States has always acted as if it wanted him to. The U.S. Embassy in San Salvador took an openly neutral stance in the most recent election, a position that was interpreted at the time as part of the United States's continuing effort to curry favor with the far right. But in general, the administration has resisted the worst twilight-struggle inclinations of its more hard-line members. High officials, including Vice President Bush on a visit to El Salvador late in 1983, have spoken out forcefully against the death squads. Meanwhile, Duarte himself overcame substantial Democratic opposition to secure support from congressional members of that party for military aid. If the ideal of a third force has been instilled with new life by events in El Salvador, it is because American politicians of both parties resisted the counsel of those who did not believe in it.

Another heartening result of our policy in Salvador has been the changes taking place in the Salvadoran military. The consequence of American training, aid, and advice has been the fashioning of a force that, if still hardly an exemplary defender of liberty (*The Economist* reports that troops tortured two men and raped two women on a recent sweep through the village of El Marillo), is a far cry from the institution that used to leave its barracks mainly for the purpose of battering peasants. After five years of war against Communist insurgents, the army is beginning to approximate a truly professional fighting force. It is a force that still wields enormous political power, to be sure, but it uses that power more responsibly than it ever did before. Just ask the disappointed Mr. d'Aubuisson.

Duarte is still under pressure. The Communist left is a threat, but the army's increasing prowess and the prospect of long-term U.S. military aid have reduced the rebels to kidnapping mayors and blowing up telephone lines. They are begging for negotiations, and Duarte probably should accept—especially if the talks help to "humanize" the war, and, eventually, to isolate the civilian left from its partners in the insurrection.

The more immediate problem is on the far right. Duarte needs to carry out his long-promised plans to move ahead with land reform and other programs in order to avoid losing workers and peasants to the left. (Strike activity has increased lately.) But the private sector isn't ready to give up any of its privileges. It probably won't unless the U.S. leaves its members no other choice, or makes it worth their while. Economic aid should be sent through Duarte's administration, not to the private sector directly, to help

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Duarte prove that only he can deliver the goods from America. We should repeal a Jesse Helms-sponsored law that forbids using U.S. money to compensate landowners who lose property because of land reform.

Will the Reagan administration learn the lessons of its own policy in El Salvador? Duarte has American backing, but more important, he has a history: he was a "third force" in El Salvador back when the U.S. was still looking for one in Vietnam. Both Duarte's belief in Christian Democracy and the structure of the Christian Democratic Party itself were established in the early 1960s. Duarte and his colleagues suffered repression, even torture, at the hands of the military. Not only Marxist guerrillas have the moral stamina to endure the long years out of power.

There are other such committed democrats in other troubled societies: people like the political heirs of Benigno Aquino in the Philippines and Kim Dae Jung in South Korea. This country should be doing more for them and less for the authoritarians they oppose. After all, now we have an example to point to. There are alternatives.

Trafficking With Terrorists

The Israelis have released 1,150 prisoners to secure the freedom of three soldiers held captive by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command. This transaction is the only real victory ever won by this radical pro-Syrian guerrilla army whose main enterprise has been terror. (Last week its fighters were bested by Shiite gunmen in Beirut. What a world!) For Israel, the price of freedom was bitter and high. As many as 40 percent of the prisoners had been serving life sentences for various acts of murder. Among those Israel let go were the terrorists responsible for killing 33 Jews in a 1978 bus hijacking on the coastal road. Others freed had taken the lives of random innocents in Tiberias and in Hebron. To show that there is international solidarity among terrorists, the Front demanded (and won) the re-

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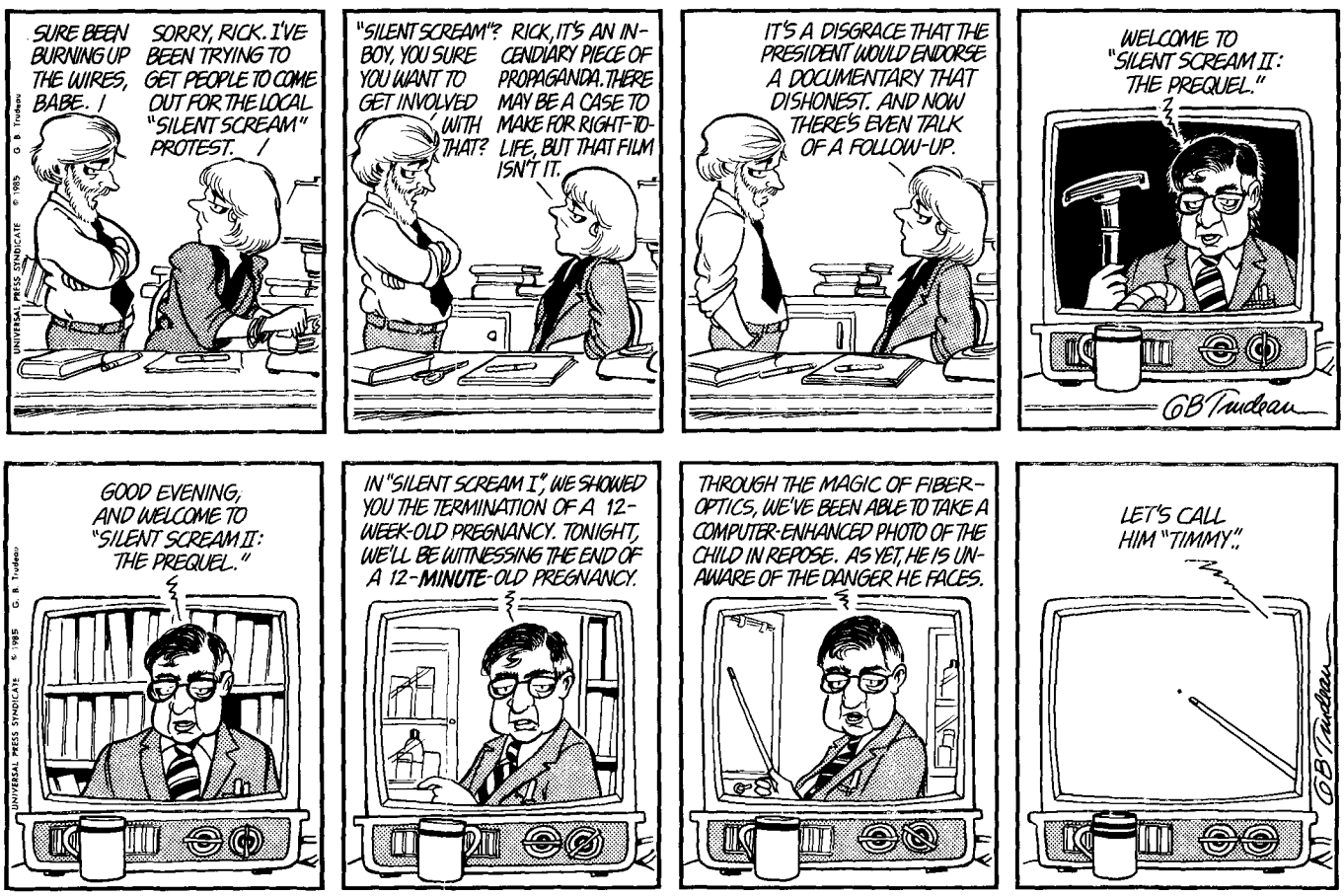
Silent Scream II: The Prequel

By Garry Trudeau

Garry Trudeau composed the following six strips for his syndicated cartoon, "Doonesbury," which appears in more than 800 newspapers around the world. His distributor, the Universal Press Syndicate, expressed some reluctance to distribute them, feeling that newspapers and readers might take offense. After some discussion, Trudeau agreed to withdraw the strips. TNR is happy to give them a home.


SURE BEEN BURNING UP THE WIRES, BABE. /
SORRY, RICK. I'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET PEOPLE TO COME OUT FOR THE LOCAL "SILENT SCREAM" PROTEST. /
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE © 1985 G. B. Trudeau
"SILENT SCREAM"? BOY, YOU SURE YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH THAT?
RICK, IT'S AN INCENDIARY PIECE OF PROPAGANDA. THERE MAY BE A CASE TO MAKE FOR RIGHT-TO-LIFE, BUT THAT FILM ISN'T IT.
IT'S A DISGRACE THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD ENDORSE A DOCUMENTARY THAT DISHONEST. AND NOW THERE'S EVEN TALK OF A FOLLOW-UP.
WELCOME TO "SILENT SCREAM II: THE PREQUEL."
GB Trudeau
GOOD EVENING, AND WELCOME TO "SILENT SCREAM II: THE PREQUEL."
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE © 1985 G. B. Trudeau
IN "SILENT SCREAM I", WE SHOWED YOU THE TERMINATION OF A 12-WEEK-OLD PREGNANCY. TONIGHT, WE'LL BE WITNESSING THE END OF A 12-MINUTE-OLD PREGNANCY.
THROUGH THE MAGIC OF FIBER-OPTICS, WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO TAKE A COMPUTER-ENHANCED PHOTO OF THE CHILD IN REPOSE. AS YET, HE IS UNAWARE OF THE DANGER HE FACES.
LET'S CALL HIM "TIMMY."
GB Trudeau

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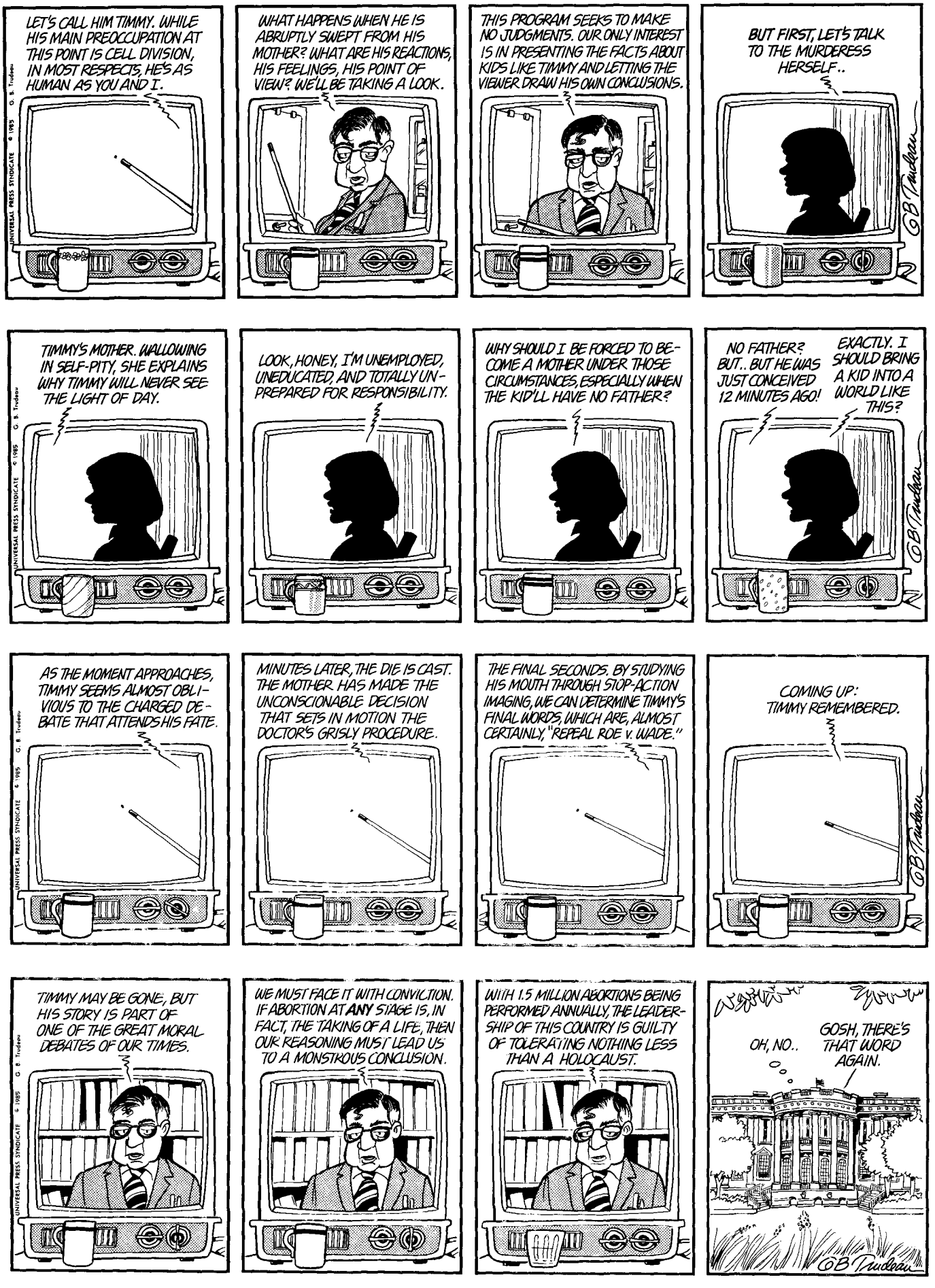
LET'S CALL HIM TIMMY. WHILE HIS MAIN PREOCCUPATION AT THIS POINT IS CELL DIVISION, IN MOST RESPECTS, HE'S AS HUMAN AS YOU AND I.
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE IS ABRUPTLY SWEPT FROM HIS MOTHER? WHAT ARE HIS REACTIONS, HIS FEELINGS, HIS POINT OF VIEW? WE'LL BE TAKING A LOOK.
THIS PROGRAM SEEKS TO MAKE NO JUDGMENTS. OUR ONLY INTEREST IS IN PRESENTING THE FACTS ABOUT KIDS LIKE TIMMY AND LETTING THE VIEWER DRAW HIS OWN CONCLUSIONS.
BUT FIRST, LET'S TALK TO THE MURDERESS HERSELF..
TIMMY'S MOTHER. WALLOWING IN SELF-PITY, SHE EXPLAINS WHY TIMMY WILL NEVER SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY.
LOOK, HONEY, I'M UNEMPLOYED, UNEDUCATED, AND TOTALLY UNPREPARED FOR RESPONSIBILITY.
WHY SHOULD I BE FORCED TO BECOME A MOTHER UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE KID'LL HAVE NO FATHER?
NO FATHER? BUT.. BUT HE WAS JUST CONCEIVED 12 MINUTES AGO!
EXACTLY. I SHOULD BRING A KID INTO A WORLD LIKE THIS?
AS THE MOMENT APPROACHES, TIMMY SEEMS ALMOST OBLIVIOUS TO THE CHARGED DEBATE THAT ATTENDS HIS FATE.
MINUTES LATER, THE DIE IS CAST. THE MOTHER HAS MADE THE UNCONSCIONABLE DECISION THAT SETS IN MOTION THE DOCTOR'S GRISLY PROCEDURE.
THE FINAL SECONDS. BY STUDYING HIS MOUTH THROUGH STOP-ACTION IMAGING, WE CAN DETERMINE TIMMY'S FINAL WORDS, WHICH ARE, ALMOST CERTAINLY, "REPEAL ROE V. WADE."
COMING UP: TIMMY REMEMBERED.
TIMMY MAY BE GONE, BUT HIS STORY IS PART OF ONE OF THE GREAT MORAL DEBATES OF OUR TIMES.
WE MUST FACE IT WITH CONVICTION. IF ABORTION AT **ANY** STAGE IS, IN FACT, THE TAKING OF A LIFE, THEN OUR REASONING MUST LEAD US TO A MONSTROUS CONCLUSION.
WITH 1.5 MILLION ABORTIONS BEING PERFORMED ANNUALLY, THE LEADERSHIP OF THIS COUNTRY IS GUILTY OF TOLERATING NOTHING LESS THAN A HOLOCAUST.
OH, NO..
GOSH, THERE'S THAT WORD AGAIN.
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lease of Kozo Okamoto, the surviving Japanese Red Army crazy who helped to massacre 26 passengers, including Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land, at Ben-Gurion Airport in 1972.

Contrary to what you may have read, this is not the first time Israel has released terrorists. At least four times since 1968, at somewhat less inflated ratios, convicted practitioners of terror (and men proud of it) have been let loose in order to free Israeli soldiers from desolate life in captivity. But this practice puts the Israelis in an ambiguous posture. They won't negotiate with terrorists, but they'll do almost anything to liberate their captured soldiers. More than that: this paradox throws into question the Israeli policy of not dealing with terrorists when they hold civilians hostage. If trade for terrorists is permissible after the terrorist deed is done, why not while it is taking place? Why the sentimentality about soldiers and not about civilians? Israel's tough convictions on these matters are much preferable to its more recent practice.

WE PREDICT that this trade will turn out to be a terrible international tragedy. In the Middle East, it will encourage more kidnapping to achieve the release of those few terrorists actually jailed by Arab governments. Four American and two French hostages are still being held by Moslem fanatics in Beirut, their photographs displayed as bait. How will the Kuwaitis be able to resist the insistent demand for release of the terrorists they've jailed? And with what moral authority will Israel now complain about the freedom habitually accorded terrorists in their neighborhood? There are four Israeli POWs still being held by Syria: one Druse and three Jews, one of whom also holds U.S. citizenship. What price will be extracted for their freedom? And how will Israel manage not to free the 27 Jewish terrorists held for violent acts against Arabs in the territories, as Israeli right-wing demagogues now demand? To his credit, Menachem Begin has said that one case has nothing to do with the other.

Just when the Palestinian extremist movement is at its lowest point in decades, the Israelis have lifted its morale and provided it with a whole crop of unrepentant heroes. For that is precisely how they were greeted when they arrived to tumultuous welcomes at Ramallah and Nablus in the West Bank, to say nothing of how they were feted in Libya. The appearance in the occupied territories of these certified Palestinian "martyrs" will inflame the already inflamed political atmosphere there. It will put such Palestinian moderates as there are on the defensive once again. It will provide moving targets for Jewish terrorists who will want revenge against these Arab terrorists, and provide the Arab terrorist movement itself with seasoned recruits and role models for what is bound to be a reinvigorated terrorist war against the Jews. This, in short, is one of those grand gestures of statesmanship that is likely to backfire and backfire badly.

NOTEBOOK

□ THE AGONY OF SOUTH AFRICA'S BLACK MAJORITY, people for whom indignity is constitutionally prescribed, has at last become an issue for Americans. It is our national shame that our government is only grudgingly critical of the apartheid regime that sustains this indignity. What a minimal gesture it would have been if President Reagan, in his litany at Bitburg—"I am a Jew in a world still threatened by anti-Semitism, I am an Afghan, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag, I am a refugee in a crowded boat foundering off the coast of Vietnam, I am a Laotian, a Cambodian, a Cuban, and a Miskito Indian in Nicaragua . . ."—also had declared, "I am a South African black." Still, it's not clear how most effectively to register the deep moral repugnance almost all of us feel toward apartheid. As often happens when young people take up an issue and passion runs ahead of analysis, attention has focused on universities. Forcing universities to sell their stocks in companies doing business with South Africa may or may not be a wise tactic. Some ethically serious observers believe that even if these companies, in turn, pull out their investment in South Africa, this will just further harden the already stone-hearted men who now govern with a hi-tech whip. It's possible, though, that this belief simply reflects the usual preference for milder methods of melioration. A compelling argument in any case is that divestiture is a matter of moral hygiene, a necessary act of separation. But if concern for moral hygiene explains the present clamor on university campuses, isn't it odd that people are imposing their outraged ethical sensibilities onto vulnerable institutions without experiencing the slightest inconvenience or risk themselves? There is reason to doubt the authenticity of student protests demanding that university portfolio managers act morally when these students don't bother to act morally themselves. We don't refer to students as investors, though there are undoubtedly some ironies to be gleaned here at some of the elite institutions. We refer to students as consumers. The protests would seem more genuinely motivated if the protesters had, for example, made a list of American corporations actively involved in South Africa from which, in an organized way, they would not buy. A boycott, in other words. If the student protesters don't do this, or something like it that actually demands some unpleasant choice in their own lives, the divestiture confrontation will resemble nothing more than spring carnival, thus confirming the tart observation of one New England don that there are no protests in winter.

□ IN OUR EDITORIAL LAST WEEK ("Innocence Abroad," June 3) we charged Ronald Reagan with historical obtuseness bordering on moral blindness for suggesting in an interview that the Republican loyalists were on the "wrong side" of the Spanish Civil War, and that Franco's Fascists were, by implication, the right side. In trying to make our point, we may have left the impression that the

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Abraham Lincoln Brigade, the American contingent fighting on the Republican side in Spain, was, at worst, confused in its motives. This is not so. The American detachment to the International Brigades, like the German and French units, was formed and run by Communists. They may have been brave. But their leaders, at least, also were—as every sound history points out, and as we learned long ago from George Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia*—murderers in the service of Stalin. And murderers, by the way, of socialist, Trotskyite, and anarchist allies in the struggle against Fascism.

□ LAST YEAR the National Endowment for Democracy awarded a grant of $50,000 to the International Freedom to Publish Committee of the Association of American Publishers ($12,000 has already been transferred). The purpose, as the grant agreement stated, was to "mount a book exhibit, 'America Through American Eyes,' at the 1985 Moscow International Book Fair . . . to demonstrate the diversity of American society and the strengths of its democratic institutions." The list of 313 books, chosen by a volunteer committee headed by Kurt Vonnegut and including Toni Morrison and Rose Styron, falls short of diversity in important respects, as Carl Gershman, president of the Endowment, recently had the audacity to point out. In fact, the committee has pulled an ideological fast one against the truth, mostly against the truth of our political and intellectual diversity. Though the list seems to contain everything from soup (*The Kitchen: 100 Design Solutions*) to nuts (*The Nutcracker* by that great American E. T. A. Hoffmann), it's not hard to see that it is unbalanced—and the publishers have not denied the charge. For example, the books on the hot topic of nuclear weapons (Jonathan Schell, Dr. Seuss, and the Union of Concerned Scientists) don't exactly cover the full spectrum of views. There's Seymour Hersh's attack on Kissinger, but no sign of Kissinger's memoirs. And lots gets left out. Religion is hardly represented, even though there has been a religious rebirth in America lately, something Soviet citizens would be especially interested in knowing about. Unaccountably, the publications of university presses have been slighted; this corpus would reflect the glory of independent scholarship, something also that Soviet citizens might want to see for themselves. The publishers, who came begging the Endowment for money last fall, have now mounted the high horse of independence—as if their volunteer committee's "vote" on 300 books is a sacred expression of democratic sentiment. They've threatened (some threat) to give the government money back unless Gershman apologizes for his "campaign of intimidation." The Endowment, meanwhile, finds itself in the first of what is bound to be a series of controversies of this sort, since its finicky purpose is to fund projects without being overtly associated with them. Maybe the Endowment ought to have steered clear of this project last fall. And the publishers shouldn't have approached the government in the first place. At the last such fair, before the government money was available, they managed fine without it. As to apologies now that the damage is done, maybe the poor taxpayers deserve them, but certainly the purer-than-thou publishers don't.

□ SELLING SOFT DRINKS LIKE POLITICIANS: *The Wall Street Journal* reports that Coca-Cola hired pollsters Pat Caddell and Richard Wirthlin to help market their new Coke. Caddell drafted the speech that Coke president Brian Dyson delivered to bottlers, announcing the new flavor. "We have chosen to reach out and seek the promise of our future . . . the time is right because the mood of America favors change, . . ." and so on. A Caddell associate said, apparently with a straight face, "It's ironic that Pat and I have been beating our heads against a brick wall . . . with the Democratic Party to get them to embrace change, and then go to corporate America and it accepts our concepts." It's ironic, all right. Although it wasn't so many years ago that people used to worry about politicians being sold like soap, it's now clear that political consultants have advanced the art of empty imageering far beyond the primitive techniques of Madison Avenue. What these absurd characters have done to our political system is bad enough. Must they destroy our economy as well?

□ THE PUCK STOPS HERE: From a letter by former congressman James Symington, representing the National Hockey League, to Treasury Secretary James A. Baker, arguing to preserve the tax deduction for corporate purchases of hockey tickets. "Society has long accepted that certain community facilities and activities merit tax deductible contributions; art museums and symphonies, for example. . . . Why this special attention to art and music? Because they are deemed to nourish and elevate the human spirit. . . . What about sport? Does it, should it occupy a lesser place . . . in the life and spirit of human communities? One of the lessons and legacies of Athens was its emphasis on the Games. . . . Sport provides 'entertainment,' yes, but it goes beyond. It reaches something in each of us that inspires the individual and endows him with a sense of fellowship with like-minded friends and neighbors. . . ."

□ FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "Emma Goldman will be remembered chiefly for her indomitable courage in fighting against bitter odds for freedom of speech during a career of thirty years as a political propagandist in this country. Those who perhaps agreed with her least gave unstinted admiration to this dumpy little woman with glowing blue eyes and a bulldog jaw who fought not only for the right to be heard herself, but also for the right of anyone to be heard who had ideas or beliefs, no matter how unpopular, he wanted to express. It was characteristic of her that she took up advocacy of birth control at a time when it seemed impossible publicly to discuss this issue; and it was equally in character that, after having demonstrated in the face of every kind of prejudice and opposition that it could be discussed on the lecture platform, she abandoned this cause to others for whom she had blazed the trail, and turned to what she considered more vital issues." (The Editors, "Emma," June 3, 1940.)

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How he bombed in Philadelphia.

GOODE, BAD, AND UGLY

Philadelphia

WHEN I LIVED in Philadelphia I sometimes took visiting friends past a weedy lot at N. 33rd and Pearl Streets, where the original MOVE house used to stand. It seemed a clue to understanding a regrettable period that was thankfully past, the years under Mayor Frank L. Rizzo. Queen Anne's lace now swayed over the scene of what the *Inquirer* called a "bloodbath." On August 8, 1978, barricaded MOVE members killed a police officer and seriously wounded two others. Later that day police stomped and beat Delbert Africa in a sequence so well captured by news photographers that an image of injustice came to characterize the incident nationally and local black leaders demanded a federal investigation. Weeks later Rizzo was overwhelmingly rejected by the voters; a year and a half later nine MOVE members were convicted of murder. The MOVE compound was bulldozed, the city solicitor said, "to prevent it from becoming a cult-type symbol." A new administration took over, and in my visits to N. 33rd it was easy to speak of Rizzo sinking out of sight in a deadly embrace with a dreadlocked double. For though MOVE was murderous, incoherent, savage, wasn't it also an inevitable outgrowth of an era of official racism and brutal police activities?

The city was subsequently reborn, its image sparkling. Then, on May 13, it suddenly became clear that the MOVE episode wasn't, as Mayor W. Wilson Goode seemed to believe, ancient Philadelphia history. His administration had virtually ignored a festering problem on Osage Avenue for a year and a half. During that time Goode built his respected record as mayor on upbeat public initiatives such as holding on to the Eagles football team, and fostering downtown development. He successfully recreated a spirit of civic pride. What to make of a foul and probably criminal presence in a working-class Philadelphia neighborhood? Hope that it would go away.

In December 1983 neighbors began appealing to Goode to take action. In February 1984, the papers later reported, a city investigator was threatened by MOVE when she inquired about the unpaid water and gas bills. No action was taken; both water and gas were allowed to flow into the house. A year ago a MOVE member appeared in a black hood on top of the house with a shotgun in his hand and gazed at police for 15 minutes before going back inside. The police chief said no law had been broken. Goode reported that he was not "overly alarmed."

Similarly provoked seven years before, Rizzo—a former police commissioner—had responded aggressively. His approach to the problem seemed characteristically ham-handed and bellicose, and it contained a strong undercurrent of racism (he taunted the group's members, calling them "idiots" and "pigs," and urged whites to band together). But troubling as it is to admit, he actually treated the case more consistently and responsibly than Goode did. After MOVE members paraded with guns on their stockade in May 1977, the Rizzo administration got warrants for their arrests, and then commenced a massive detail of round-the-clock surveillance that went on for a year. When the *Philadelphia Daily News* embarrassed Rizzo by reporting the costs of the operation, he started a legal battle to blockade the house so as to starve MOVE out. Following a 54-day blockade, MOVE members agreed to come out, give up their weapons, be booked, and then evacuate the premises within 90 days. MOVE ultimately violated the pact. The police went in on August 28, and the shooting began.

Goode attempted to defend his response to MOVE by insisting that he had sought first to negotiate. "On Thursday, on Friday, on Saturday," he said lamely, emissaries were sent to deal with MOVE. Yet if the Rizzo experience had proved anything, it was that negotiations would be fruitless without patience and that precipitate action could be disastrous.

Certainly Goode was offered many opportunities to begin that process earlier. Last August, on the anniversary of the 1978 shoot-out, 300 police officers massed outside the home, reportedly to counter a death threat against the mayor. By that time, the newspapers would later report, the district attorney had advised the city of numerous charges against MOVE for which warrants might be sought. But again, Goode said publicly, "We have talked about this among ourselves and we did not find any reason or basis to make a move against MOVE."

By then the 6200 block of Osage Avenue occupied a strange geopolitical status. Police dispatchers were instructed to refer all calls from the block to plainclothes civil affairs officers so as to keep uniformed officers off the block as much as possible. There are indications that the block's residents, who were subject to loudspeaker-amplified threats, the pattering of MOVE members across their roofs at night, and even beatings, were told to keep

CARTOON BY MIKE PETERS

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their problems from the press so as to allow the city to work things out quietly. The city did offer one rope to the floundering community: children on the block could get Saturday morning counseling to help them deal with the obscene presence in their midst.

And then, suddenly, the mayor acted. Why? The Goode administration says that things changed on Osage Avenue this spring, that MOVE's threats had escalated since the summer. This is hard to believe; the conduct cited in the warrants that paved the way for the confrontation was in most ways similar to conduct observed long before. The more logical explanation is that the media got hold of the story. On May 1, 50 neighbors of MOVE held a press conference to say that they could no longer live next to the primitivists, and this time when Goode and his appointees said they saw no basis for arrests, the press rose up. "What the hell are these people talking about?" demanded a *Daily News* editorial. On May 5 the *Inquirer* called Goode's efforts inadequate, and said that MOVE was holding a neighborhood and government hostage.

A week later the siege had begun. The managerial care that characterized Goode's political rise was nowhere visible. Efforts to breach MOVE's fortifications in order to effect Plan A (tear gas bombing) failed in part because the police had gained insufficient intelligence about the nature of the fortifications. Goode later explained the decision to force matters to a head on the day the siege began—thus the bomb at 5:30 p.m.—by saying that nightfall might have allowed the MOVE members to scurry into the sewer system through tunnels, or blow up the block. But it turned out there were no tunnels. As for the bomb, police had been testing the material for weeks, the *Inquirer* reported; Goode didn't know about it until 15 minutes before it was dropped.

ONE OF the most disturbing aspects of the debacle is what it revealed about Goode's political instincts. He was apparently so sensitive to the public perceptions of his conduct that he had abandoned his own perceptions, and in doing so lost some control. MOVE was a horror, but so long as the media did not insist that it was a horror, there was no problem. It was a logic Goode expressed himself, amazingly, in explaining to the *Daily News* in May 1984 why the masked rooftop gunman did not alarm him. "These things have happened throughout the last four months but have not gotten the kind of public attention they received today," he said. And last week Goode, who can be counted on to maintain a public mask of supreme composure, grew weary toward the last round of a long press conference, and blurted out, "Some of the very same people who are asking these questions now were in this room asking different questions a week ago: 'Why don't you act?' " Reporters cried out that they were only reporters. For an instant Goode seemed stunned.

There is one other point that bears mentioning. Wilson Goode may have wished to regard the 1978 shoot-out as ancient history, but it was for many of the police officers on Osage Avenue a painful and living memory. The police had probably underestimated the firepower of a group known largely at the time for its bombastic posturing. Only one MOVE member was wounded, but the police suffered unexpected casualties. And their superiors had insisted on restraint; at a crucial moment a high police official had ordered his men to fall back and stop shooting—a decision that provokes anger to this day.

Arguably that history made the police on Osage Avenue unduly wary of personal risk, thus tending toward a no muss-no fuss solution like the dropping of a bomb. In brief conversations I had with police officers, there was a sense that this operation had been successful. "We didn't make the mistakes we made last time," said one officer at the barricade on Pine Street. "The lesson" of 1978 was that the strategy should be controlled and careful, said Frank Selgrath, an editor of the police union newspaper, *Peace Officer*. "Though it seems ludicrous to say so, every action was taken to see that there was no loss of life or property."

I don't mean to diminish the courage of stakeout officers who put their lives on the line and tried to break into the house through the basement. But after those efforts were repulsed, the call went out for the copter. Although the police should be pleased that they lost no one this time, the other bottom line is this: in 1978, 11 children were rescued from the MOVE house; in 1985, only one child was saved while four burned to death.

But as Goode keeps reminding people, the operation was his responsibility. One of his main defenses was that he had proved himself a "stand-up mayor." He was reminding the community that he had always had its demands in mind, that he was accountable. Perhaps what Philadelphia needed in this case was a sit-down mayor, someone who wouldn't act before gathering all the information, including the lessons of the recent past.

PHILIP WEISS

Philip Weiss worked at the *Philadelphia Daily News* from 1979 to 1981.

State religion isn't religion.

CLERGY AND COMMISSARS

THE AUDIENCE in the Harvard lecture hall seated itself according to political convictions. To my right were the Ukrainians, Latvian Baptists, Soviet Jews, and Russian priests whom I have seen at rallies for Soviet political prisoners and Solidarity. To my left were some members of the Harvard religious community and peace movement, and many unknown people of a known type—ladies in sensible New England dress and gentlemen who populate presbyteries and parish councils of Wellesley and Lexington. At the front were the American

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and Soviet clergymen, dominated by a Russian Orthodox bishop whose girth and features were reminiscent of Soviet anticlerical caricatures. The assembly ostensibly met to discuss churches' peace activities, East and West. But it did not appear peaceful.

Those on the right had come to disrupt and to propagate, those on the left to "dialogue" and understand. But the right didn't really believe it could propagate among the left, and the left had no real desire to understand the right. In the tumultuous affair, the greatest bond of understanding emerged between the Soviet clergymen and the émigrés. Hectored to his limit, the Russian bishop flung at them a Russian proverb. The translator rendered it, "The sick dog does not sit at home," but the public rejected this pale rendition. When I called out the proper translation, "scabrous dog," they roared with delight. The correct world of the Anglo-Saxons had been shattered; the meeting ended with a Latvian Baptist's call—"No peace without freedom." Afterward small groups of peace activists expressed their regret to the Soviet clergy that the purpose of the meeting had been confounded.

THIS DEEP SPLIT in the Western religious community about how it should maintain contact with the clergy and churchgoers of the Soviet Union is likely to continue. As long as the American church groups refuse to understand the reasons for the émigrés' protest, similar meetings between the leaders of the two countries' churches will be the scene of heckling and recriminations. Soviet-American church dialogue on peace must be based on the truth, and many American church leaders are evading some truths about the Soviet Union.

The émigrés and their religious traditions represent a world in which choice between evil and good has been constant and personal. They carry scars of executions, famine, and deportations from totalitarian states, whether from 1917, 1944, or 1984. Only the amalgam of family, nation, and faith—so potent in present-day Poland or Lithuania—protected them from totalitarianism. They have little hope that the "Godless persecutors" will be overturned in their time, but they uphold ideas about afterlife and duty that give this life meaning. In the peace activists they see people who just might save a church, or a prisoner's life, or a sibling, if they would only stop being so polite to the Soviets and exert informed pressure.

The peace activists and mainline American churches are committed and moral. They are the veterans of civil rights and Vietnam War protests who feel an obligation to act as a moral conscience for their society. Their churches have emphasized social action and civic responsibility, and are less likely to be sure of afterlife and traditional duties. They may know that the Soviet Union has committed some monstrous acts, but they do not find its system overly violent or repressive. They fear above all a breakdown in communication that might lead to nuclear holocaust. They reach out to those Soviet citizens they can—the church leaders. They feel they can help Soviet believers someday, by quiet diplomacy, but for now the Pentagon and the hard-liners in the Reagan administration are the enemy. Can't the émigrés understand how dangerous their policy is?

YET IT IS the influential American church establishment whose shortsightedness has the most dangerous consequences. The visit to the USSR of a 266-member delegation of the National Council of Churches last June is a case in point. Whatever the visitors thought they were accomplishing, the American public will remember that their spokesmen, such as Dr. Bruce Rigdon, a professor at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, were "irritated" by a demonstration of Soviet Baptists in a Moscow church. What Soviet believers will make out of other insipid comments of the delegation as reported by Tass is more difficult to gauge. Such naïveté is reminiscent of the ideological pilgrims of the 1930s, and it may seem like just one more sign of the successful re-Stalinization of Soviet life. Probably most horrified were the Soviet churchmen of real religious conviction. They mouthed the lies prescribed by the regime only to see American men of God eager to believe them.

Is this too harsh a view of Christians who wish to work with fellow Christians to avoid the ultimate catastrophe of nuclear war? Shortly before the controversial visit, the U.S.-USSR Church Relations Committee issued a brochure called "Together on the Way: The Story of the Dialogue Between the Churches of the United States and the Soviet Union." It contains reactions by American church representatives to earlier visits. Ms. Agnes Marsh, national vice president of United Presbyterian Women, relates what she was told at the Soviet Peace Council. "We were told that Christians who have been imprisoned are not there because they are Christians; they have committed other offenses. I wondered what percentage of our prison population are members of Christian churches and why it had never occurred to me that Soviet Christians may break the law." Ms. Marsh seemed unaware that the "offenses" in the Soviet Union include teaching religion to children under 18 years of age and worshiping in a faith or church that the regime refuses to register.

Naïveté frequently seems to cross over into apologetics in "Together on the Way." One participant, Robert F. Smythe, attempts to deal with broader problems by explaining the Soviet point of view to the American public. "Critics of the Soviet's natural desire to protect its European buffer tend to forget that the United States, also, by a series of treaties and other arrangements, continues to maintain a large military presence in both Japan and West Germany, where the same war memories and similar defense concerns exist." Smythe need only take a trip to Poland or Czechoslovakia to find out how the inhabitants of the "buffer" compare their situation with that of Japan and Germany.

In general the brochure seeks to promote "understanding" of the Soviet Union, to propagate the achievements of contacts between Soviet and American churchmen, and to popularize the peace movement. But from Arie R.

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Brouwer's praise of the "local Commissioner of Religious Affairs," whom he describes as "a government official, and therefore a Communist party member" (and, I would add, a KGB operative), to Robert White's contention that in the Soviet-American propaganda war "the truth would be found somewhere in the middle," one finds a desire to avoid certain hard truths. Above all, the NCC delegates choose to ignore that the Soviet Union is a totalitarian state that persecutes and manipulates the churches and the faithful.

IS THE PROBLEM merely one of lack of information? Certainly numerous American churchmen are ill-informed about the mechanisms and goals of Soviet totalitarianism. But the information is available from numerous sources. Just as the National Council of Churches was preparing its trip, Reverend Michael Bourdeaux, one of the foremost authorities on religion in the Eastern bloc, was in London delivering his address for the Templeton Foundation Prize for Progress in Religion. He described increasing persecution in recent years by a neo-Stalinist regime, infiltration of the churches, and indifference by most of the Western churches, which ignore this situation in their striving for "peace." His program was a clear one: "We need reconciliation, but we can never build reconciliation on anything other than truth."

Father Bourdeaux's conviction comes from 20 years of talks with the believers of the USSR, and not just with their state-approved leaders. His research institution, Keston College in Kent, England, has collected, translated, and disseminated tens of thousands of statements by believers on the treatment of the faithful and the policies of the church leaders.

How representative are these statements? After all, recent experience has shown that the human rights dissent movement that Western observers saw as such a hopeful phenomenon in Soviet society turned out to be representative of the views of only a small stratum. But 123,000 Lithuanian Catholics have signed petitions expressing their support for Father Alfonsas Svarinskaus, sentenced to seven years of imprisonment and three years of internal exile in May 1983. It's hard to doubt that there is widespread discontent with Soviet religious policies. Yet Bruce Rigdon, spokesman for the NCC delegation, declared that the situation for religious groups had improved just as we were receiving clearer evidence of brutal persecution of believers. A samizdat journal called *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in the Ukraine* began appearing just as the delegation visited. The nine issues demonstrate how, far from Western reporters and visiting delegations, hundreds of activists in the western Ukraine are struggling against the KGB and Soviet authorities for the legalization of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, outlawed since 1946.

The Ukrainian Catholics belong to the "non-registered" faiths with which the National Council of Churches maintains no dialogue. But even the Russian Orthodox Church, a registered body with which the National Council cooperates, has declared its persecuted state. Statements from Vladimir Rusak, a deacon from Moscow, and others reached the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Vancouver in 1983, but the official Russian Orthodox Church delegation successfully stopped discussion of them.

Most damning of all, we have 70 pages of extracts from a report by Vasilii G. Furov, assistant chairman of the Council of Religious Affairs of the USSR, describing the state of the church and the cynical mechanism for controlling and subverting it. He makes clear that eventually all religion must be snuffed out by government manipulation. For present tactical purposes, however, Furov divides the Russian Orthodox hierarchy into three categories according to their subservience to the state. He makes usefulness in foreign contacts, that is, the ability to handle Western delegates, one of the major criteria.

Those Americans responsible for the NCC contacts are either so single-minded about the peace issue, or so deluded in the desire to promote U.S.-USSR friendship that they are willing to ignore or distort reality. All this is not to say that there are not real Christians even among the official Soviet church representatives, and that there are not good reasons to maintain contacts with these churches. One of the best of these is the desire to strengthen the church's bargaining position with the Soviet state.

In the past few weeks the National Council of Churches has begun to question its policies. This questioning must include a rethinking of its approach to the Soviet Union and Soviet churches. First, they should state unequivocally that the USSR persecutes believers and deprives them of their religious freedom. With this should come an active program for the defense of believers in the USSR that should go down to the grass roots of the member churches of the NCC. All the discussion of quiet diplomacy and compliance with the Russian Orthodox and other Soviet churches' requests for silence about this persecution should be abandoned as a capitulation that allows the Soviet authorities to exercise censorship, even in the West.

Second, the NCC must regain the respect of all Americans who are concerned about the tone of its statements and the effect of its policies. Every political system has imperfections, against which Christians should protest, but churchmen should never seek to whitewash totalitarian states or put the U.S. and Soviet governments on the same moral plane.

Through its contacts, the National Council of Churches affects Soviet religious life and international affairs. It would appear that it has done so with little thought about the consequences of its actions. Even more dangerous, it has been willing to sacrifice truth for short-term goals.

FRANK E. SYSYN

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How the Supreme Court is going to be Reaganized.

REAGAN'S FULL COURT PRESS

BY FRED BARNES

YOU GET INTO POLITICS, you play the odds. President Reagan wants to suppress skin magazines and X-rated movies, allow kids to utter prayers in public schools each morning and make it hard for a woman to get an abortion. He's been seeking a constitutional amendment in each case to accomplish these. The trouble is, the odds are not good on getting one amendment, much less three, through Congress—where a two-thirds majority in both houses is required—and 38 state legislatures.

When the odds are bad, you look elsewhere. And Reagan has found an alternative where the odds on success are considerably better: the Supreme Court. The president and his aides have concluded that if his conservative social agenda is to be achieved, it will be done by the High Court, not Congress and the states. As a consequence, the Reagan administration has all but abandoned serious pursuit of constitutional amendments during its second term. Now Reagan, the White House staff, and the Justice Department are obsessed by the idea of stacking the Court with reliably conservative justices.

Their day is at hand. Any actuarial chart would tell you that with five justices over 75 years old, there is likely to be, well, some turnover during Reagan's second term. Maybe a lot. The average age of the justices is just over 70, making today's Court the second oldest in history; only the Nine Old Men pilloried by President Franklin Roosevelt were older (average age 72 in 1937). And not since the Court's infancy nearly two centuries ago has there been a period like the last ten years in which only a single vacancy occurred. The dam is about to break.

Reagan filled the one vacancy created by Potter Stewart's retirement in 1981 with Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman justice and an unflinching conservative. More unflinching still are the six men on the short list of potential nominees for the next vacancy or two. These guys make Chief Justice Warren E. Burger look like a dangerous moderate. Three are federal appeals judges: Robert H. Bork, Antonin Scalia, and Richard Posner. The other three are old cronies of Reagan: Attorney General Edwin Meese III, his predecessor, William French Smith, and former interior secretary William P. Clark. Bork, a professor at Yale Law School before joining the bench, was considered in 1981 and also back in 1975, when President Ford picked John Paul Stevens, now 65, to succeed Justice William O. Douglas. Bork is the legal profession's foremost advocate of judicial restraint, a quality much admired in the Reagan administration. And thus he is normally viewed as heading the list.

In fact, he did head it, but he doesn't anymore. "All logic points to Scalia now," says a senior Justice Department official. When Scalia (pronounced Scuh-LEE-uh) joined the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia in 1982, he figured to serve in Bork's shadow. Instead, he has emerged in his own right. An article on him last March in *The American Lawyer* touted him as the new "Live Wire on the D.C. Circuit." He is as fierce a proponent of judicial restraint as Bork, and he may have improved his standing inside the administration with his anti-press dissent in a libel case recently. Better still, Scalia was attacked in the press for his opinion, notably by columnist William Safire. In Ronald Reagan's eyes, being bashed by the press never hurt anyone. (Bork sided with the press in that case, but the politics are complicated since the journalists in question were the conservative columnists Evans and Novak.)

A Scalia nomination makes political sense. "What a symbol," a White House official exclaims. "Nino would be the first Italian-American on the Court. He's got nine kids [ages five to 24]. He's warm and friendly. Everybody likes him. He's a brilliant conservative. What more could you want?" At 49, he is ten years younger than Bork, which is important since Reagan is eager for his justices to have more than just a hit-and-run impact on the Court. And unlike Bork, Scalia lugs no political baggage. As solicitor general (on leave from Yale) in 1973, Bork complied with President Nixon's order to fire Special Watergate Prosecutor Archibald Cox, after Elliot Richardson and William Ruckelshaus resigned rather than do so. The controversy over that still dogs him.

Like Scalia, Posner, 46, is a Reagan appointee to the federal appeals bench (the 7th Circuit in Chicago) from the law faculty of the University of Chicago, a hotbed of conservative legal scholars. *The Wall Street Journal* wasn't far off the mark recently when it dubbed him "the most influential federal appeals judge." Posner is the father of an entire branch of legal thinking known as "law and economics." It consists of applying economic principles like efficiency to legal analysis. Posner is no judicial activist. But unlike Bork and Scalia, he is known more for his own strongly held legal views than for a belief that judges should show "restraint" in applying their own views. This explains why he ranks behind them as a potential justice.

The cronies trail all three appellate judges. Reagan isn't

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likely to tap them unless he gets to nominate three or four justices in his second term, which is quite possible. Clark, 53, has the best shot. As California governor, Reagan weathered flak to put him on the state Supreme Court. Reagan had promised to abide by the state bar association's recommendations for judicial appointees, then picked Clark anyway after the bar failed to recommend him. (He never graduated from law school.) Clark's qualifications undoubtedly would become an issue again if Reagan nominated him for the Supreme Court. Besides, he had a falling-out with Nancy Reagan two years ago.

Meese's associates say he relishes the cops-and-robbers aspect of being attorney general too much to give that up for the ennui of judicial work. "Ed and the Court wouldn't be a happy match temperamentally," an aide says. More important, Meese, 54, is extraordinarily controversial, and his nomination to the High Court would stir strong Senate opposition. Smith, 67, is hardly a lightning rod, but he keeps saying he has no interest in the Supreme Court. As if to punctuate the point, he moved back to California when he stepped down this year as attorney general. "I don't see why anybody would want to be a judge," he told a friend. "It's boring."

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Still, there's no lack of applicants. Lawyers are as hungry to get on the Supreme Court as young starlets are to make it big in the movies. There's not much they won't do to get there. Some lawyers and judges campaign openly. Favored tactics include the airing of views that match those of the administration in power and the wooing of administration officials. Bork is accused of campaigning almost every time he gives a speech, though he says, quite correctly, that he's merely expressing long-held ideas that no one paid any attention to before. Safire attributed Scalia's press-bashing libel dissent to eagerness for a Supreme Court appointment. Federal Appeals Judge J. Clifford Wallace of the 9th Circuit, often mentioned but passed over in 1975 and 1981, has raised eyebrows with a flurry of law review articles. The subject: that old Reagan staple, judicial restraint. Wallace doesn't need to cozy up to officialdom; he's already a pal of Meese.

Whom would the Reaganites like to replace on the Supreme Court? Seven of the nine would do, all but William Rehnquist, 60, and O'Connor, 55. Oddly, the Reaganites are angrier at Nixon-era appointees than they are at the three holdovers from the liberal, activist Warren Court: William Brennan, 79, Thurgood Marshall, 76, and Byron R. White, 68. Since he succeeded Chief Justice Earl Warren in 1969, Burger, 77, has turned the Court to the right, but not sharply enough for Reagan and his lieutenants. "Burger thinks of himself as a great conservative," complains a senior Justice Department official. "He isn't really."

On both judicial philosophy and political ideology, Reaganites give low ratings to most of the justices appointed by Republican presidents since 1969. These six justices might have formed an unswervingly conservative majority on the Court. They didn't, and disappointment has bred contempt. A Justice Department official says: "On a scale of ten, only Rehnquist deserves a ten. I'd give O'Connor an eight, Burger and Powell fives, Stevens a two, and Blackmun zip, zero."

The Reaganites feel that the Burger crowd defected to the other side in the war between advocates of "strict constructionism" and advocates of "judicial activism." These terms, of course, come from the conservative camp. Few lawyers and fewer judges consider themselves to be "loose constructionists." But Reaganite conservatives favor judges who, in most situations, define their mandates as narrowly as possible, and who refrain as much as possible from overruling the executive and legislative branches.

The starkest conservative indictment of the Burger Court was handed down a year ago in *Policy Review* by Terry Eastland, now Meese's chief spokesman at the Justice Department. Eastland wrote that the Burger Court has compiled

> a record of judicial activism that rivals its predecessor's. For example, it is the Burger Court, not the Warren Court, that has approved busing as a remedy for segregation, announced a woman's right to abortion, extended procedural due process to public school students charged with misbehavior, and effectively rewritten the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to allow racial quotas in private employment. . . . Such decisions have continued to entangle the federal judiciary in policy-making, thus diminishing the capacity of Americans to govern themselves.

What the Reagan conservatives *don't* mean by "judicial restraint" is an intense regard for previously established

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legal doctrines. "Judicial restraint," in their view, does not require one to be squeamish about overturning precedents. It just doesn't make sense for a conservative judge to treat all precedents as sacrosanct, Posner writes in his new book, *The Federal Courts* (Harvard University Press). Posner complains: "A good liberal judge gives little weight to precedents that are not liberal, but a good conservative judge gives great weight to all precedents, liberal as well as conservative." He asserts that "if this view is accepted, and the judiciary is dominated by successive waves of liberals and conservatives, the law will necessarily grow more liberal even if the number of liberal and conservative judges is the same in the long run."

There's no precedent that Reaganites are more anxious to overturn than *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 decision (written by Nixon appointee Harry Blackmun) holding that a woman's right to privacy includes the right to have an abortion. And they are one vote away from nullifying that decision. The two dissenters in 1973, Rehnquist and White, are still there, and O'Connor noted in a 1983 case that *Roe v. Wade* is "completely unworkable." That's three. Burger, who has indicated in case after case that he is ready to switch, makes four. If Scalia or Bork replaced Lewis F. Powell, who is 77 and was operated on last winter for prostate cancer, or Blackmun, 76, or Brennan or Marshall, you could kiss *Roe v. Wade* good-bye. And states would be left to make whatever abortion rules they want.

Where else would a Reagan Court cut back on earlier "activist" decisions? Just about everywhere. Administration officials say they would like a Supreme Court that would free the government to ban pornography again. If a community wanted to make it a crime to rent X-rated movies for home viewing on VCRs, so be it. Again, this comes under the heading of judicial restraint: judges letting communities make up their own minds about pornography without intervention by the courts. Rigid adherence to one-man, one-vote probably would be abandoned, and state legislatures might be allowed to model their upper houses after the U.S. Senate, where representation is not determined by population. Rulings on church-and-state issues would be less averse to the interests of organized religion. The Court would promote federalism by keeping out of many state matters. All foreign policy issues would be brushed aside as none of the Court's business. And on and on. One ruling that would be hard to classify as "judicial restraint," but that the Reaganites hunger for nevertheless, is an outright ban on racial quotas in hiring and promotions.

HOW FAR would a Reagan Court go in overturning precedents? What about *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 1954 ruling that struck down segregated schools? Wasn't it activist? Wasn't the will of elected legislators cast aside by judges? "Restraint is not everything," says Posner. "*Brown v. Board of Education* was an activist decision, but a justifiable one." In an interview with Lyle Denniston of *The Baltimore Sun*, Bork said: "You can't simply reverse national development in some fields. It would be too destructive."

A debate rages in conservative legal circles about whether the Supreme Court should roll back decades of economic regulation. Richard Epstein, a law professor at the University of Chicago who is sometimes mentioned as a potential Reagan appointee, is a conservative with no interest in judicial restraint. He contends that many laws infringe on constitutionally protected property rights. "There are many blatantly inappropriate statutes that cry out for a quick and easy kill," Epstein said in a speech last fall. Conservative advocates of judicial restraint respond that in a democracy it's the prerogative of legislatures to enact "blatantly inappropriate" laws.

This debate has revived as a topic of conversation *Lochner v. New York*, a 1905 case in which the Supreme Court struck down a state law limiting a baker's work to 60 hours a week and ten hours a day. A good decision, the conservative activists argue: Why should the government restrict a baker's freedom to work as long as he wants? Nope, say the restrainers: conservative "Lochnerism" paved the way for the liberal activism of the Warren years. At the moment, the "restrainers" have the upper hand. Epstein "doesn't have a prayer," says a White House official. "A lot of us will lie down in the gutter to block him."

THE FEAR running through the upper reaches of the White House and Justice Department is that, somehow, the judicial counterrevolution won't happen because the wrong people will be appointed to the Supreme Court. Look at the Burger Court, after all. The Reagan White House was so determined to prevent this in 1981 that it used a computer to trace O'Connor's personal and professional background. Two precedents weighed heavily in their minds, says Henry J. Abraham in a new edition of his book *Justices and Presidents* (Oxford University Press). One was President Eisenhower's nomination in 1957 of Brennan, then a New Jersey judge; he turned out to be a tireless liberal and judicial activist. The other was Reagan's own choice, when he was California governor, of Donald R. Wright as chief justice of the state Supreme Court. Like Brennan, Wright immediately bolted for the liberal, activist camp.

There's no way to guarantee that a conservative will stay conservative on the High Court, but the odds are better if the nominee passes preliminary tests. One is the abortion issue. The administration says that it doesn't require potential appointees to promise to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. What matters is the nominee's overall judicial philosophy. There's a catch, though: anyone who approves of *Roe v. Wade* hasn't got the requisite philosophy.

One way to avoid surprises is to select candidates who have served on the federal appeals bench, now stocked with what a Justice Department official calls a "cadre" of potential Court nominees. "It's a good idea" to pick a federal judge, says Meese, who will play no small role in any appointment. That way, "you know the judicial philosophy of those judges because they've had experience and they've written opinions you can look at. Knowing how they'll act as a judge, which is very different than some people act as a lawyer, for example, is a good idea."

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This is why Scalia, Bork, and Posner figure so strongly in Reagan's plans for the Court. They have been tested, and have come through swimmingly. Look at Scalia. A year ago he issued a stinging dissent from a decision to grant a hearing to an American who complained that his ranch in Honduras was being used for a U.S. military exercise. "The Court's decision reflects a willingness to extend judicial power into areas where we do not know, and have no way of finding out, what serious harm we may be doing," he wrote. ". . . If, for example, it had been the staging areas for our recent military operations in Grenada, the injunction sought here could have caused incalculable harm." In a 1983 dissent, he sneered at a ruling requiring the Food and Drug Administration to determine if lethal injections given to condemned prisoners met FDA standards. "The condemned prisoner executed by injection is no more the 'consumer' of the drug than is the prisoner executed by firing squad a consumer of the bullet," Scalia said. Both dissents were soothing music to Reaganites.

Now listen to Bork, always a voice for restraint. In a 1982 speech he accused activist judges of trying to impose their "university-educated upper-middle class" values on the Constitution. "There is nothing wrong with that class, but there is also no reason why its values should be imposed upon everyone else," he said. "If that happens, then the Constitution will have been gentrified." Last August Bork rejected a former Naval officer's claim that the Constitution forbade the Navy to dismiss him for being a homosexual. "If the revolution in sexual mores that appellant proclaims is in fact ever to arrive, we think it must arrive through the moral choices of the people and their elected representatives, not through the ukase of this court," he wrote.

Bork has a wry sense of humor. Dissenting last month from an appeals court ruling on sexual harassment in the workplace, he noted the bizarre loophole that frees bisexuals from being accused of sex discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. "It is 'discrimination' if a man makes unwanted sexual overtures to a woman, a woman to a man, a man to another man, or a woman to another woman," he wrote. "But this court has twice stated that Title VII does *not* prohibit sexual harassment by a 'bisexual superior [because] the insistence upon sexual favors would . . . apply to male and female employees alike.' Thus, this court holds that only the differentiating libido runs afoul of Title VII, and bisexual harassment, however blatant and however offensive and disturbing, is legally permissible."

Bork is also a firm believer in the right of communities to impose moral standards. In a lecture to the American Enterprise Institute last December, he complained of the "entry into the law of the First Amendment of the old, and incorrect, view that the only kinds of harm that a community is entitled to suppress are physical and economic injuries. Moral harms are not to be counted because to do so would interfere with the autonomy of the individual. That is an indefensible definition of what people are entitled to regards as harms." This, too, was Reaganite music.

Posner is nearly as reliable, though a bit more eccentric. One of his decisions cleared the way for a yarmulke-wearing Jewish basketball team to play in a league with a rule against headgear. In another case, he used cost-benefit analysis in allowing the FBI to use as evidence videotapes it had made of a terrorist safe house. "The [Puerto Rican terrorist group] has the plans, the materials, and the know-how to kill in gross," he wrote. "The benefits to the public safety are great, and the costs to personal privacy are modest. There is no right to be let alone while assembling bombs in safe houses." Posner has written 12 books and more than 100 articles. A *Wall Street Journal* survey found that he had written more opinions since 1981 than any of the 125 other appeals judges. His reputation for brilliance was burnished by a comment ascribed to Brennan, for whom he served as a law clerk. Brennan supposedly said he has met two true geniuses in this life, Posner and William O. Douglas.

WHAT STANDS between the Reaganites and their dream of a Reaganized Supreme Court is that the liberals on the Court are desperate to avoid letting Reagan appoint their successors. They're holding on as long as they can. The two full-blown liberals, Brennan and Marshall, have already signed up law clerks for two and three years from now. False rumors of Marshall's imminent resignation due to ill health have been surfacing for years. When he was hospitalized in 1972, it was said he couldn't last the year. As long as he's ambulatory, Marshall will stay. Blackmun, once a Burger clone but now a near-liberal, is just as determined to thwart Reagan. Despite his bout with cancer, Powell has recruited law clerks for next year and says he's not leaving. White has made no move to the door. The only justice talking about resigning is Rehnquist, the one the Reaganites want to stay. Nobody takes him seriously, anyway.

For all their preparations, the Reagan crowd isn't ready for one contingency, the departure of Marshall, the Court's only black. Meese says there should be no "particular racial slot. . . . I'm opposed to quotas even on the Supreme Court." But some officials are nervous about the prospect of national pressure to replace Marshall with another black. The only black who has been talked about favorably by administration officials for the Court is Thomas Sowell, the conservative economist. His name—and that of Walter Berns of AEI—came up in a casual discussion of putting a nonlawyer on the Court. Don't bet on Sowell.

There is a scheme, however, for naming a new chief justice. Unlike the liberals, Burger is perfectly happy for Reagan to name his successor. But being the sort of guy who likes pomp and ceremony, he doesn't want to leave until after the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution in 1987. Of course, the Senate might have gone Democratic by then, and Reagan might face trouble in getting a new chief justice confirmed. Here the odds come into play again. Who of the Reaganite persuasion would be odds-on to get confirmed? Sandra Day O'Connor, that's who. What senator would vote against the first woman chief justice? Odds are, not many. □

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In a country where the army is 'mightier than God.'

THE GUATEMALAN SILENCE

BY PIERO GLEIJESES

Guatemala City

"THEY WERE ALIVE when they took them away, and alive they must be returned to us," chanted 100 people gathered in front of the office of the attorney general in Guatemala City on January 15, 1985. The demonstrators belonged to the only human rights organization in Guatemala, the Mutual Support Group for the Families of the Disappeared. The police did not intervene. The military government of General Oscar Mejía Víctores has proclaimed its respect for human rights and its decision to return the country to democracy. Those who believe that Guatemala is at last becoming democratic were encouraged by the existence of the Mutual Support Group and by the government's tolerance. But on March 30, a few days after Mejía Víctores had publicly stated the group was infiltrated by "subversives," one of its six leaders, Hector Orlando Nunez, was kidnapped by four armed civilians at a bus stop. Hector's body was found the next day. He had been beaten to death, his chest and head crushed, and his tongue cut out.

Two days later a second leader, Rosario Godoy de Cuevas, disappeared along with her three-year-old son and her younger brother. Rosario, the 24-year-old wife of a student leader kidnapped in May 1984, was articulate, soft-spoken, and desperately brave. Witnesses had given her the license plate numbers of her husband's kidnappers: the two cars belonged to the security forces. "I knocked on so many doors," Rosario told me in January, "I went to the police, to the courts, to the political parties; I sent so many telegrams, I made so many telephone calls—but nothing happened. . . . Many of the friends I had shy away from me in fear. When we meet in the street, they tell me that I am young and that I should start my life again." On April 4, the corpses of Rosario, her child, and her brother were found in a ravine on the outskirts of Guatemala City.

Hector and Rosario are two of at least 40,000, and more likely 100,000, of Guatemala's eight million people who have died at the hands of their government in recent years. In a country whose beauty clashes with the sadness of its people, their deaths are symbolic. Guatemala is not moving away from its bloody, tormented past. Rather, the past is replaying itself in a never-ending cycle in which the government becomes more sophisticated but is impelled by the same motives and driven to the same methods. These methods were summarized by Amnesty International in 1981: "Tortures and murders are part of a deliberate and long-standing program of the Guatemalan government." They are indispensable tools to defend the privileged and keep the Indians, who make up 60 percent of the country's population, in their place.

"What pains me is the Indian's silence," the Guatemalan poet Luis Alfredo Arango has written, "not his night so dark, or the burden that crushes him." The silence and the dark night began over four and a half centuries ago, with the invasion of white men from Europe who clumsily hid their lust for riches and power behind the Christian cross. Today Indians are no longer branded and sold as slaves, and the 1945 constitution formally abolished forced labor. But force is no longer needed to persuade the Indian to lend his labor to the seasonal needs of the country's biggest landowners. A 1982 study by the U.S. Agency for International Development noted that Guatemala, a country the size of Ohio, has the most unequal land distribution in Latin America. The Indians crowd the northern highlands, where they lead miserable lives on minuscule plots that cannot support a family. Erosion and population growth in the highlands have proved the landowners' best allies. The Indian asks for the privilege of coming down to the sugar and cotton plantations of the humid coast and working for as little as two dollars a day.

In 1981 and 1982 left-wing guerrillas mounted an unprecedented challenge to the regime of President (and General) Romeo Lucas. But the army retaliated, and the guerrillas were unable to protect the population. "The repression was pitiless," recalls the Guatemalan bishop Juan Gerardi. Today massacres are rare, and the highlands are peaceful. Why should it be otherwise? Lucas unleashed a whirlwind of indiscriminate terror, which was continued under his successor, General Efrain Ríos Montt. For two years the highlands were littered with corpses of men, women, even infants. Rape was a banal event, charred villages a fact of life.

These atrocities were the work of demented men, but they were also evidence of an implacable logic. The army had formulated its own response to Mao Tse-tung's dictum that "the guerrillas must swim among the population

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as the fish in the water." How could the army differentiate the tame and the rebellious among the Indians in the highlands? So many had reason to hate the regime. Only the massacre of whole communities could dry the pond where the fish swam.

Terror proved effective. Many Indians fled into the mountains, and the army's vengeance fell upon those who stayed behind. In the mountains the Indians starved, froze, became ill. Then, beginning in late 1982, they came back, begging for the privilege of staying alive. The army proved generous. It no longer murdered the supplicants, except here and there as a salutary reminder.

THE LIFE and death of one small village in the department of Alta Verapaz is revealing. In late 1982 the village learned of an army massacre against a nearby community. About 200 of the 280 residents decided to flee. One of them recounted to me the words of a friend who stayed behind: "If we have to die, we want to die in our village, where our ancestors are buried, and where our blood will nourish our land." They stayed and were massacred, the survivor told me. But eventually he and the others who had lived like hunted animals in the mountains of the neighboring Quiche province had to return. "The army did not punish us," he said. "They gave us food and they made us dance a marimba. Our bodies danced, because this is what the army wanted. But our souls wept. We will never forget what they did to our families."

At an army base about 150 kilometers away, Colonel Roberto Mata, a prominent young officer, explains that Quiche province has 500,000 inhabitants, four-fifths of them Indians. "In 1980-81, the Indians massively supported the guerrillas; now they are with us. The army is helping them, the army is aware of their needs. This awareness has helped us to defeat the guerrillas and has won us the Indians' loyalty."

"Judge us not by our past but by what we are doing," pleads Foreign Minister Fernando Andrade in his office in the Presidential Palace in Guatemala City. He is a man of refined manners, good-looking, and highly intelligent. He is also the most influential civilian in the military government. "A Constituent Assembly, freely elected in July 1984, is busy at work on a new constitution, and once this is ready, presidential and congressional elections will take place. Political parties are now freely competing; human rights violations still continue—we are fully aware of that—but their scope has greatly decreased and will continue to decrease. Criticize our faults, but also see our progress. Guatemala is changing."

But exactly who is changing in Guatemala? Not the private sector, composed of industrialists, bankers, and plantation owners. Not the army. Yes, the relationship between the two has changed. As a Guatemalan technocrat notes, "The army, which had entered the partnership as the bride, gradually grew whiskers and developed huge muscles." The military even instituted its own version of agrarian reform. Large tracts of undeveloped land were opened up and given to generals and colonels. Nevertheless, the marriage continues: the shared conviction that social reform constitutes an intolerable threat has forged a bond stronger than minor quarrels over the divisions of the spoils.

An economic counselor at the U.S. Embassy explains, "This is very much a private enterprise economy, and my marching orders under Reagan are to push private enterprise as much as I can, but I must tell you in all candor that in this country there are certain things that the private sector is not willing to do, and that they must do if they want to enter into the 20th century. One of these things is to tolerate collective bargaining. At most, they might tolerate very weak unions." They might not even tolerate that much. In January the Christian Democrats in the Assembly proposed mentioning in the constitution the "social functions of private property," a modest suggestion that wealth entailed social responsibility. The private sector rose as one to strike down this heretical proposition.

As for agrarian reform, "it is not a realistic prospect for the foreseeable future," concedes Phil Chicola, a political officer at the embassy. The subject is taboo: none of the political parties raises it, nor does the press. "So many of my colleagues have been killed," remarks a prominent journalist, "and so many more may be killed in the future if they overstep the invisible line. The army has a long memory."

A PHOTO on the first page of the Guatemalan daily *El Grafico* shows General Mejía Víctores inaugurating the model village of Ojo de Agua in Quiche province. Once again, the military is demonstrating its goodwill toward the Indians. Twelve such model villages have already been built under the army's supervision, and 50 more are planned. Located in strategic areas, they house the survivors of nearby settlements that have been destroyed ("by the guerrillas," government officials stress). "We are not just rebuilding villages," boasts a Guatemalan army officer, "we are establishing the basis for people to improve their living conditions."

I went to Quiche to visit the model villages of Acul and Tzalbal. They have electricity in the houses and water taps in the streets. I saw one-room wooden houses with roofs of corrugated zinc. I saw streets with names like "Avenue of the Army of Guatemala" and "Avenue of Freedom." In the outskirts of both villages I found a few men who, with some hesitation, consented to be drawn into a conversation. They began by telling me they were "content":

> If we obey, they don't kill us anymore. Earlier the army came and killed a great many people and burned our houses. The guerrillas did not kill people . . . the problem is that the guerrillas could not protect the people. . . . The army is like an overseer, the lieutenant is the boss. Whatever he orders we must obey, otherwise they punish us. . . . Here we don't know about political parties. I don't know what party I would vote for. The lieutenant says that political parties are not good for us. . . .

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I left with an image of desolation, of a concentration camp without barbed wire. And yet have the Indians who dared to complain to a perfect stranger in two villages full of soldiers really been broken? They expressed no thought of rebellion—but didn't their indictment contain a spark of rebellion? I do not know.

SINCE 1982 the army has introduced a far more encompassing change than the model villages into the socio-economic structure of Indian society: the Civil Defense Patrol. The principle of the CDP, Colonel Mata explains, is similar to that of the neighborhood crime watch "that I joined while I was living in Springfield, Virginia, during my tour at the Inter-American Defense College." There was no obligation to join, "but I felt bad staying at home while my neighbors were out in the streets protecting women."

The CDPs operate almost exclusively in the Indian highlands. In every village the army appoints a CDP chief; under him are squads of a dozen or so men from ages 16 to 60. Every squad serves for 24 hours at a time without receiving food or pay. Depending on the number of men in the village, each group has duty once every three to ten days.

Armed with clubs, machetes, and occasionally rifles, the squads patrol their villages. "We have to search for subversives, stop strangers, examine their papers. We must report on everything," one Indian told me. According to a priest, "The CDPs are also used to cordon off a village and brutalize the inhabitants, or to pick up a supposed guerrilla and torture him. All have to be involved in his torture and/or his murder."

Those Indians who supplement a miserable income through seasonal work for landowners on the coast must first receive the authorization of the CDP chief to leave their village. If they miss their duty they must find a replacement or, depending on the whim of the chief, they may have to pay a fine. The luckless soul who returns late or who refuses to volunteer is branded a "subversive," and in Guatemala, says a longtime observer, "if they suspect someone of being a subversive, anything goes: the worse the better."

The CDP chiefs have replaced the traditional Indian leadership in the villages. There are reports of CDP chiefs who are humane, but many more are petty tyrants who exploit their positions. One woman told me that her brother Martin had been seized by the CDP chief in the neighboring village of Chitatul (not its real name). The chief, she said, liked Martin's girlfriend, who lived in his village. "I cannot go to Chitatul to speak to Martin's girl because the chief of Chitatul's CDP does not allow it. No one from my village has dared to accompany me to Chitatul or to the army post."

So she went alone. "The [army] officer in charge promised that he would help me find Martin if I gave myself to him. I accepted." When that officer was transferred, another arrived. "He too promised that if I gave myself to him he would help me find Martin. I accepted. He remained about three months, and then was replaced by another officer. This one did not ask me to be his woman—he only asked me questions about subversives." The woman said one soldier told her he had seen Martin, bloody and beaten, in the army post. Other soldiers promised her they would look into the case if she slept with them. "I told them that I would, but they must first bring me information. They never did."

"JUDGE US . . . by what we are doing." In 1966 a university professor named Julio César Méndez Montenegro won presidential elections that were, for once, conducted without fraud. He was the candidate of a reformist party that promised an end to repression. He was a moderate man with an honorable past. Méndez Montenegro is still alive—he is ambassador to Mexico—yet he is a political corpse. Bloodshed and not social reform characterized his presidency. He provided a thin veneer of legitimacy while the army engaged in indiscriminate repression to crush a fledgling guerrilla movement.

The specter of Méndez Montenegro now haunts those who desperately want to believe that the elections scheduled for October could be the beginning of a political opening. Will the armed forces really relinquish power? "How could an army that is hard at work fostering democracy and helping the Indians have massacred unarmed civilians? We cannot have changed in one day," argues Colonel Mata.

Indeed they have not changed. The officers who have killed so many to uphold an oppressive status quo have confidence in their methods. "We won in Guatemala," they boast, "while the U.S. was losing in Vietnam." Across their southeastern border, in El Salvador, they see an army that is mired in a difficult war—an army, they conclude, that has allowed the U.S. to dictate social reforms that undermined El Salvador's stability. Far to the south, in Argentina, they see the humiliation, public trials, and even imprisonment of military officers who turned power over to civilians. Why should they court a similar fate? The army, says one saddened priest, "is untouchable. They are mightier than God. They are everywhere, they see everything, they know everything."

The current electoral campaign in Guatemala resembles a beauty contest. The presidential candidates, each dressed in his best accoutrements, parade in front of the jury—the army's high command. From the wings watch other men who are in a position to influence the jury—the business leaders. The traumatized public that will cast the ballots on election day is not even admitted into the theater, but watches from afar.

Why has no candidate promised to reform the tax system? In Latin America the tax base averages 15 percent of national production; in Guatemala it is 6.5 percent. Why does no candidate raise the issue of agrarian reform? "I cannot advocate agrarian reform because it would not be tolerated by the military," explains Vinicio Cerezo,

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the leader of the centrist Christian Democratic party, and the most left-leaning of the candidates. "Even if I am elected," he continues, "only the door to democracy will have been opened in Guatemala. My government would not be one of social reforms—which the army would not allow—but one of transition toward democracy. Only my successor could begin the social changes that Guatemala so desperately needs, including agrarian reform." Cerezo concedes that "if I win the popular vote, the military might refuse to acknowledge my victory; even if I am inaugurated they might make it impossible for me to govern."

It is more likely that Guatemala's next president will be Jorgé Carpio Nicolle, a man who embodies the emptiness of the current democratization. Carpio, who owns two newspapers, first turned politician a year ago. He has the physique of the successful candidate: tall, good-looking, and impeccably dressed. More important, he is the army's favorite. This alone should assure him the vote of the highlands, since few Indians will dare to believe that the all-powerful army could not find out how they voted.

Carpio presents himself as the candidate of reconciliation. As president, he stresses, he would eschew confrontation; rather than provoking the rich, he would seek to persuade them to accept higher taxes on their untilled lands. When I asked why the powerful would be swayed, he had no answer. And when I asked why, if elected president, he would not be the Méndez Montenegro of the 1980s, he said: "In the late 1960s the United States was not concerned about human rights and did not really push for a true democratization in Guatemala. Now, with the Reagan administration, the U.S. is truly committed to effective democracy in Guatemala."

IT IS TRUE that the administration has consistently claimed that Guatemala is democratizing and thus deserves U.S. aid. This is what U.S. officials argued in 1981 while Lucas presided over the slaughter in the cities and the countryside. Only after Lucas was overthrown did they concede his regime had been bloody. Then they praised his successor, General Ríos Montt, with renewed enthusiasm. "At last the government has come out of the darkness into the light," exulted Ambassador Frederic Chapin in April 1982. In the midst of the savage repression in the countryside, President Reagan said, "I believe Ríos Montt is receiving a bum rap from the press." Now U.S. officials praise Ríos Montt's successor, General Mejía.

The Reagan administration knows both what it wants and what it cannot achieve. It wants to help the Guatemalans because the regime has the redeeming quality of staunch anti-communism. Yet it realizes that in order to obtain the funds, it must first be able to claim that the Guatemalan regime is mending its ways. In February 1985 it asked Congress for $10.3 million in military aid for Guatemala and $80.6 million in economic assistance. The administration knows that the most that can be reasonably hoped for in Guatemala is a pretense of democratization. The Guatemalan military is hardly likely to give in to U.S. pressure at the very moment it feels victorious.

Indeed, the Guatemalan officers expect to be courted by Washington. This partly explains the one truly novel aspect of General Mejía Víctores's policies. Guatemala maintains correct relations with Nicaragua; it has refused to participate in military maneuvers organized by the U.S. in Honduras. This rebelliousness led to an unsuccessful trip to Guatemala by Nestor Sanchez, the deputy assistant secretary for defense, to urge the Guatemalans to be more cooperative. This foreign policy might change—at a price. As Guatemalan officers are fond of saying, "There are expensive prostitutes, there are cheap prostitutes—and there are the Hondurans, who give it for nothing." If U.S. officials want their help, they must first pay. For the Guatemalan military the administration's aid package is only a first step.

WITHOUT social reforms in Guatemala, elections are a cruel joke, and repression will remain the only means of assuring social peace. The intensity of repression will not depend on the personal wishes of the civilian sitting in the Presidential Palace, but on the degree of challenge from below felt by the country's real rulers. The terror apparatus is in place, and fully intact.

Those who believe there has been a change of heart in the army must ask why the Guatemalan Church, unlike the Salvadoran Church, still has no office to monitor human rights abuses. "In El Salvador there is a government, there is the military, and there is the opposition. In Guatemala, there is only the military and the opposition. If we had a human rights office, those people who came to us to denounce human rights violations would be killed," Bishop Gerardi told me in January. Less than three months later Rosario Godoy and Hector Orlando Nunez were dead.

In Guatemala I saw a confident military and a defeated people. A few weeks later in Mexico I met leaders of the more than 2,000 guerrillas still fighting in remote areas of Guatemala. Will they never amount to anything more than a mere nuisance, as the Guatemalan army claims? I recall what several priests told me. The army has spread terror among the Indians, they said, and the Indians are disillusioned with the guerrillas, who could not defend them. But the Indians do not hate the guerrillas, for the guerrillas did not rape and did not slaughter. What the Indians will never forget and never forgive is what the army did to them. The army deludes itself if it believes it has crushed the Indians' spirit. It has merely forced them back into silence. "Unless [the army] now deals with the socioeconomic roots of the rebellion," Bishop Gerardi said, "its victory will be fleeting. Guatemala is a time bomb." If the Indians ever believe that the guerrillas have a chance to win, they will rise again. And they will not be alone. Thousands of Guatemalans are consumed by the same hatred. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Fat Part, Lean Criticism

John Cassavetes appears in an item called *Marvin & Tige* and reminds us that he is an extraordinary actor. All respect to his persistence and free spirit as a filmmaker. (A book about his films by Raymond Carney, *American Dreaming*, has just been published by Oxford.) To me, his acting is more successful. I have seen eight of the ten films he has directed, almost all of which he wrote, and none of them lives in my memory like his performance in another director's work, *Mikey and Nicky*.

Marvin & Tige
(Major Films)

Elaine May's film was released in late 1976 and failed quickly. It has recently been rereleased (see adjoining box), and I've just seen it again for the fourth time. I think it stronger than ever, and a chief bulwark of its strength is Cassavetes's performance as a petty racketeer on the run because he cheated the boss who has now put out a contract on him. Cassavetes tears through this dark film like a charming maniac, sly, frightened, laughing, suspicious, delaying his getaway with deliberately provoked quarrels, turning his ecstatic fear into sexual advances. At any given moment he conveys three or four thought-streams and emotions, like a fine pianist keeping all the voices present in a complex musical piece.

Marvin & Tige is only for connoisseurs of acting who want to see Cassavetes. Nothing else in the film is worth a syllable of comment. He plays a well-bred Atlanta alcoholic, far down on his luck, who befriends a desperate 11-year-old black orphan boy. Cassavetes's reasons for accepting the role are his own; he had to know that, big though it was, it was a mine field of troubles. The writing is sub-soap opera, the story is smiles through tears and vice versa. What he had to do—and does—is imagine the role well-written in a script of substance, then play that unwritten part in that nonexistent script, using only the materials in hand. You can hear him *insisting* on some of these dreadful lines in tones that simultaneously acknowledge their staleness and convey the reality of which they are only stale signals. We read a good deal in certain kinds of film criticism about directors' stylistic triumphs that transcend the banality of the material they have to work with. Here is a grand example of an actor doing the same thing.

Speaking of criticism, I've been collecting reviews of *A Passage to India* by people who don't usually review films, and a curious lot these exhibits are. Noel Annan (*The New York Review of Books*, January 17) describes the meeting between David Lean, eventually the screenwriter-editor-director of the film, and the dons of King's College, Cambridge, which is E. M. Forster's executor. Annan says the dons had read a screenplay of the novel by Santha Rama Rau that reassured them enough about the eventual quality of the film so that they were willing to meet Lean. But "as it turned out"—an odd phrase because the dons' reassurance had come from Rau's script—David Lean wrote his own screenplay. Says Annan: "It was not difficult to predict the result." Indeed it wasn't: Lean's film is for Annan a self-fulfilling prophecy. Lean made the film as it is, says Annan, because he has "little respect for [his] audience." But what about Annan's respect for his readers? He makes two glaring and important misstatements of fact. He says that the film "begins with the arrival of the P & O liner that brings not only Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested to Bombay, but the Viceroy as well"; and that the film "ends in Srinagar with magnificent shots of the Himalayas." Neither of these statements is true. The film begins and ends in rainy London. This is something more than a detail: the start and finish are Lean's attempt to round off the themes, to transmute into cinematic form some of the ideas—especially at the end of the book—that he felt would not work on screen in Forster's form. With that frame of start and finish, Lean is trying to imply Britain's failures in India and India's inevitable triumphs. Annan doesn't deal with these attempts by Lean: he simply rules that they don't exist.

In the February 14 issue of *The New York Review of Books*, Frank Kermode writes that, as he recalls, Annan wasn't present at that Cambridge meeting (although the impression in Annan's article is otherwise) and that his report wasn't entirely accurate. Santha Rama Rau's screenplay could not have figured in the matter, says Kermode, because Lean had sent copies of his own screenplay to Cambridge in advance of the meeting. Again, where is Annan's respect for his readers?

Kermode feels he must note that he tested Lean's vaunted knowledge of the novel by asking him the name of Ronnie Heaslop's Hindu servant. On this weighty question, Lean flunked. So much for upstart film rabble.

Now Christopher Hitchens weighs in with a three-page scathing review of the film in *Grand Street* (spring 1985). An aggregate of about one page is devoted to quotations from Forster's letters and

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Almost You. Light comedy, funny and sexy, on serious subject. New York Yuppies discovering the *real* facts of life. (Reviewed 6/3/85)

Mikey and Nicky. Peter Falk and John Cassavetes as friends and betrayers, criminal and sexual, in Elaine May's unappreciated drama. Technically flawed but unique, unremitting, important. (1/1&8/77)

What Have I Done to Deserve This? Madrid today. Fiercely black comedy about a coolly amoral family and their friends, trying to make out. Keenly surgical until final wobble. (5/20/85)

Where's Picone? Naples today. Warm farce about a grubby grifter. Giancarlo Giannini embodies a culture as he creates a man. (5/27/85)

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from Lean's indefensibly grandiose comments in interviews. This decor is insufficient for Hitchens: he ends with rumor. "Rumors filtering from the set suggest that we were narrowly spared even worse—we hear of Alec Guinness walking off one scene, of Peggy Ashcroft being invited to play the rendezvous in the mosque with more love interest." (Bother the fact that it's not a rendezvous, in novel or film: it's an accidental meeting.) Hitchens insists that even what we *don't* see proves that the film is bad.

He complains that Lean "manages to be unfair to everybody. The British are portrayed in stock terms, as brutes, duffers, or eccentrics, and the Indians as chattering *babus*, servile and cunning by turns." Tapan Raychaudhuri, who teaches Asian history at Oxford, disagrees about the source of the "stock terms" and Lean's use of them (*The Times Literary Supplement*, April 5). In his review Raychaudhuri writes:

> The Indian characters in Forster's novel are not entirely convincing and are somewhat stereotyped, as are his British bureaucrats. . . . [Lean's] Anglo-Indians . . . appear more real than in the novel, as much the creatures of historical circumstance as are the hapless lot they ruled over.

Though Raychaudhuri spots some startling gaffes in the film, he calls it "pure enchantment; a splendid film." Yet he, too, says: "A forced happy ending is the logical climax of [Lean's] vision of India." One might dispute this view of the concluding scenes in India, but—again—they are not the end of the film. It ends, not amidst snowy peaks but in Adela Quested's rain-curtained living room.

I'm hardly arguing that one must like the film. Some of my best friends don't. The point is that, in these articles, those who dwell in strata high above the film world have deigned to descend to find support for their prejudices. Annan says: "Every great novel loses when dramatized because it conveys meaning that cannot be seen on the screen." In an isolated state, this platitude is inarguable, but all it does experientially is to prepare Annan and like thinkers to discount any film made from a great novel. Obviously no great novel *needs* to be filmed, but in the right hands—as experience proves soundly—a great novel can be filmed in a way that puts another art truly at its service, a way that conveys meanings visible on the screen. Examples: Bresson's film of *Diary of a Country Priest*, Rohmer's film of *The Marquise of O. . .*

I don't contend that Lean's film is in their class; but I saw it again recently, and apart from the atrocious score (which won an Oscar!), I think even more firmly that the art in its making transmutes major elements of the novel into cinematic form, suggests other resonances, and honors Forster. With his view of film, he might not have acknowledged the honor; nonetheless I think it was paid to him.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

The Post-Modern Blues

Critics have been so busy lamenting the decline of the arts that they may not have noticed that their own discipline is languishing, too. No great authoritative mind is thinking freshly, clearly, and generously about literature or society. The golden age of Trilling, Wilson, Macdonald, Rahv, and others, characterized by their broad view of culture, has been eclipsed by the leaden climate of a dry narrow decade, with its arcane structuralist pyrotechnics and neoconservative ideological purifying rites. Recognizing this, Charles Newman, in his new book, *The Post-Modern Aura: The Act of Fiction in an Age of Inflation* (Northwestern University Press, 203 pp., $18.95, $7.95 paper), attempts to restore cultural criticism and the history of ideas to their former primacy as intellectual disciplines—a brave and necessary, but only marginally successful, effort.

Newman's prose reflects the extremity of the problem he is trying to solve. It is often unreadable, dense, and oblique, shrouded in technical philosophical terms or graceless colloquialisms. Ironically, Gerald Graff's brief preface to the book is a much more coherent statement of its argument—a critique, in Graff's words, "of the pretensions of the literary-cultural Avant-Garde in the United States today . . . [and] also a critique of the current opposition to the Avant-Garde—neorealists, academic humanists, and political conservatives." Newman thus casts his net wide enough to include not only American Post-Modernism (contemporary literature only), but also all the forces currently arrayed against the Post-Modern sensibility, not excluding public indifference.

What Newman means by "Post-Modern" is never very clear. He is usually more eager to discharge his quasi-conservative fusillades than to bother defining his target. One notes that the "Post-Modern aura" was developed in opposition to the reigning Modernist movement initiated by Flaubert and extended by Joyce, Eliot, and Hemingway, and their efforts to link classical traditions to modern perceptions. But Newman identifies precious few Post-Modern writers to illustrate his thesis, which may be why his book has no index. While the book is studded with scores of philosophers, economists, intellectuals, and structuralists, it offers only niggardly references to the specific artists who constitute its main subject—thus raising suspicions that Newman, though a novelist himself, is considerably more interested in his ideas than in his examples. Unfortunately, the ideas—as even the titles of his terse chapters sometimes indicate ("The Threnody of Solipsism," "The Sublation of the Avant-Garde")—suffer from a kind of terminal opacity.

Despite all this, I found the book refreshing. Without being a Marxist himself, Newman looks at literature and society through a Marxist prism, and perhaps his most original and controversial assertion is that inflation has affected not only our economics, but also the very way we perceive and propagate our art: "Inflation is reflected in late capitalism not as political havoc but as cultural anomie." Newman sees Post-Modernism as the culminating point of two related inflationary revolutions—an explosion of talent and skepticism following World War II, and a revolution in criticism and pedagogy, particularly in journalism and the university.

It is the second revolution that evokes Newman's deepest scorn and generates his most negative energies. Identifying

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the intellectual liberal classes as publicists for a Modernism stripped of its terror and its adversary role, Newman charges these critics with making all art potentially respectable and accessible, and thereby bringing about the anti-intellectual reaction of Post-Modernism, a movement impatient with mind and, in the words of Robert Alter, "often tinged with the exhilaration of hysteria about the validity of language and the very enterprise of fiction." But, according to Newman, the second revolution makes the whole idea of an avant-garde a sham, since it cannot exist when the establishment is not coherent enough to attack. This is not a new concept—it was first formulated by Trilling—but it is used to reject both the Post-Modernists and their enemies.

Chief among the latter are the neoconservatives, many of whom have turned into enemies of literature itself (believing, in many cases, that it can be replaced with their own essays). Newman correctly perceives that if the avant-garde is still twitting the bourgeoisie of the 1950s, the neocons are still obsessed with the avant-garde of the 1960s: "The myth of the doomed creative artist fighting the smug philistine has been replaced by the myth of the parasitical artist living off the public trust." Still posing as Modernists, these critics are continuing to attack mass culture while defending the very social system that insures its hegemony, thus creating

> a new 'Adversary' style as shrill and ideological as that of the Anarcho-Leftism it has replaced . . . [offering] no new standards but only a stingy pathos, that minor tonality which only echoes a dispirited Avant-Garde.

NEWMAN is equally acute about modern literary criticism, which he calls socially useless, a "tyranny of methods," incorporating the artistic prerogatives of self-glorification and megalomania. He is particularly stern toward Harold Bloom, whom he accuses of reducing literature to an Oedipal fantasy (thus validating the generational aggression of graduate students), of confusing art and criticism, and (a fault the author shares) of unclear thought: "Criticism is artistic in that it ought to intensify and clarify perception—not make it impossible."

By the end of the book, Newman has settled down to some serious business—not just the individuals and movements that vitiate culture, but the institutions that are helping to destroy it, particularly television and publishing. He sees perniciousness in the way TV treats all events as pure "story," ignoring the complexity of language and the plasticity of life (thus generating in Post-Modernism an unnatural hatred of narrative), and he attacks conglomerate publishing, itself enslaved by bookseller chains, for reducing literature to packaging, for flooding the market with "issue" books (blacks, women, youth), and for creating its own kind of artistic suppression:

> A classic totalitarian society censors at the production point. An oligopolistic democracy censors at the distribution point. . . . If a book deserves to be printed and is refused because it won't sell 10,000, that is censorship.

FINALLY, Newman examines the antinomy between formalism and realism, between a literature no longer concerned with the way we live but rather with an endless "interrogation of its own artifice," and with the more accessible, more popular writers who refuse poetical effects and critical theorizing, dismissing even the Modernist tradition as irrelevant or obscurantist. The conflict is meaningless, Newman writes, when the real enemies are the concentration of economic and political power, careerism, boredom, the cynicism of cultural producers, and the sheer bewilderment of the public. Our literary crisis, in short, is largely institutional, so when Newman, in a hortatory passage, calls for a literature that will help us "unlearn" the traditional oppositions by once again resonating with experience, he seems to be ignoring the very obstacles he has just described. Still, the capacity of this man to contemplate the central questions, no matter how crabbed his diction or gnarled his thought, is itself an encouraging sign in a culture that otherwise seems so bleak and narrow.

I am myself not as despairing as Newman about the future of Post-Modernism, though the institutional environment is much as he depicts it. I speak, of course, from the perspective of theater, which Newman fails to consider. Still, I persist in a belief that there has been an extraordinary outburst of Post-Modernist energy lately, not entirely divorced from experience or moral passion, still groping toward tradition, and that there is a considerable-sized audience poised to receive it. Newman asks, in a typically negative passage, "What happened to that newly sophisticated and enthusiastic literate public created within distinct memory by the explosion of higher education, the new pedagogy, and the enthusiastic assimilation of foreign cultures?" I would answer that it is still visible, and surprisingly hospitable, to compelling works of art, particularly in music, dance, and theater. The audience for Philip Glass, Laurie Anderson, Steve Reich, and Jean-Michel Jarre—all of whom combine popular styles, classical modes, and avant-garde forms—is huge and growing. The experimental dance and theater explorations of Mabou Mines, the Wooster Group, Meredith Monk, Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, Ping Chong, Martha Clarke, and, preeminently, Robert Wilson, while reflecting the anomie and irony of the age, are also attempting to investigate traditional moral, social, even political subjects, though with new technical and experimental equipment.

It is not hard to produce examples of Post-Modernist music, dance, and theater that are as self-reflective, solipsistic, alienated, and addicted to "endless, unnerving change" as Newman's Post-Modernist literature, but being involved with a public, the performing arts are always more obliged to discharge a public function. Perhaps because sophisticated critics have largely ignored the performing arts recently, the "second revolution" has not yet absorbed or rationalized their accomplishment; still, the accomplishment exists and grows, validated by an increasingly receptive audience. It may be, as Newman says, that the avant-garde, political and cultural in Europe, is merely aesthetic in America, but there is more to advanced art than just attacking a real or putative establishment: artistic change may also be measured by revolutionary changes in perception. This is another way of saying that although the institutional environment for culture may be more rigid and venal than ever, and although much of what currently passes for Post-Modernist art is fake or corrupted, this country is crazy enough, sufficiently diverse and unpredictable, perhaps even confused enough, to accommodate any inspired figure with the inner resources to break through our baffled sensibilities and transcend our institutional boundaries. □

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TELEVISION

Gorgeous George

It is important to watch Phyllis as often as possible, for she is a lesson to us all: a championship woman (Miss America, 1971) possessed of unfailing good humor and limitless confidence. These are not merely desirable traits in the new hostess of "The CBS Morning News"; they are essential. Phyllis George is the network's notion of what constitutes watchable womanhood, and the network has risked a lot of money, a lot of ratings, and considerable prestige on that notion. So far its gamble has not paid off. And this is troubling to CBS because Phyllis is getting one million dollars a year to show off her skills. None of which, of course, includes hosting a news show.

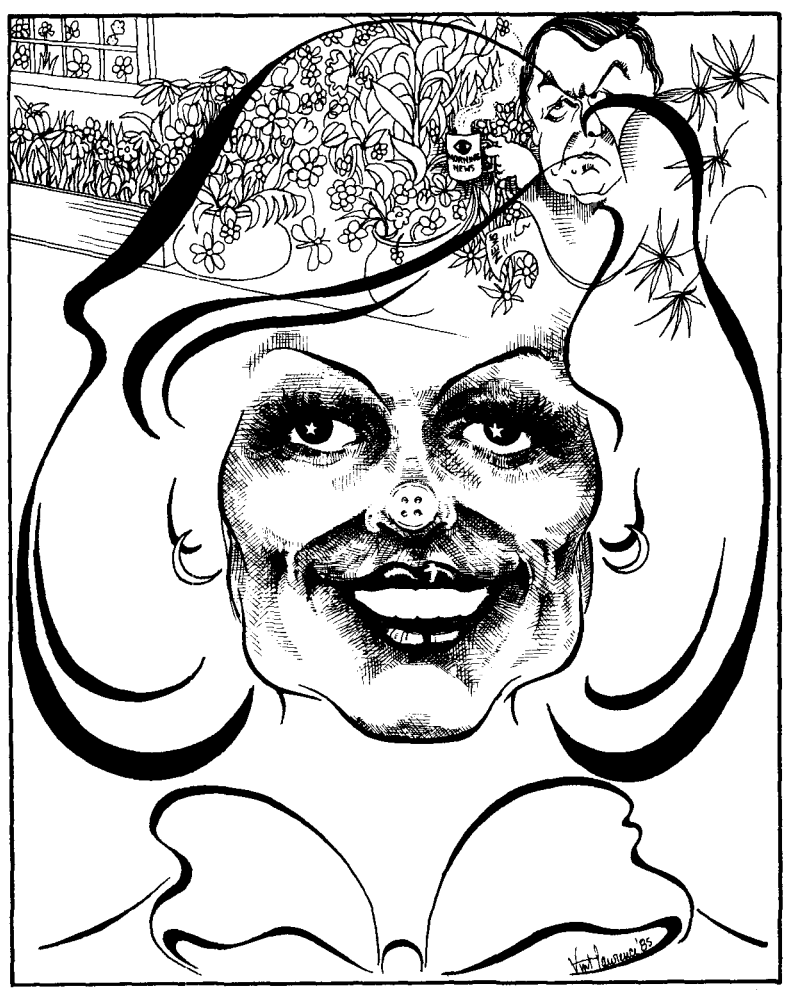
When, for instance, she interviewed Lady Bird Johnson and Helen Hayes on the subject of the former first lady's research center for wildflowers, the genial star complimented her two guests on their good fortune.

"You're also now getting state and federal funding, which is"—tacking on her favorite adjective—"terrific."

"No, alas," Lady Bird replied. "There is no state and federal funding for our center."

It was an incident that might have mortified a true journalist. What kind of research department produced that bit of misinformation, leaving Phyllis with her mouth flapping and her terrifics dangling *like two inches of soiled bra strap*?

But Phyllis, unfazed, moved right along. The two old ladies were consistently addressed with the raucous cries of a candy striper in a nursing home: "You all are looking ver-ree good this morning." Almost always she looks on the bright side. When Gary Dotson, freed after six years in prison on a rape charge, and Cathleen Webb, his erstwhile accuser (who now claims her accusations were false), appeared before Phyllis, the morning hostess cheerily produced an ingenious resolution to the problems of her two guests. "How about," suggested Phyllis, "a hug?" Dotson and Webb declined.



PHYLLIS GEORGE BY VINT LAWRENCE

Despite the show's invincible bonhomie, lately there has been some cause for dismay. Trailing a distant third behind the "Today" show and "Good Morning America," "The CBS Morning News" now has neither the ratings it covets nor the cachet it possessed when Diane Sawyer cohosted. Of course ratings under Sawyer, as CBS is quick to point out, were almost as dismal as those brought in last week, but at least Sawyer is a newswoman of considerable talent and experience. This is not necessarily an asset for a female anchor, and the network is betting that not many viewers care to have their breakfast brought to them by a hungry newswoman. CBS is still reaping the results of that decision.

Early days with Phyllis produced all sorts of bumblings: a reference to Andrew Lloyd Webber as the composer of "Jesus Christ Superstore," and a question to one guest about whether he had received a call or a note from Fernando Lamas—who, as it turned out, was dead. There is evidence that the existence of CBS coworkers came as a considerable shock: unpronounceable to Phyllis were the names of CBS newsman Bob Schieffer as well as the show's resident doctor who likes to give advice about keeping in shape. There may be network anchors around who would kick themselves for making such errors, but Phyllis isn't about to ruin her panty hose. Anyway, as the wife of Kentucky's former governor, she has learned to tackle these minor social gaffes:

"I called you Doctor Ar-no," a hugely amused Phyllis told the grinning health specialist. "And you're not French, you're Scottish. I apologize, Mister Arnot, will you forgive me?"

"Doctor Arnot," corrected Dr. Arnot, losing his smile.

Her cohost, the amiable Bill Kurtis, about whom no one is anxious to write, is furious that he, a dutiful journalist of 16 years' experience, must share the morning broadcast with the cheekboned veteran of "NFL Today." But since journalism, much like prostitution, is a career in which just one foray makes a professional, we must not be too surprised that Phyllis got the job. Those who protest Phyllis's presence on high-minded journalistic grounds are missing the point entirely. The anointment of Phyllis has nothing to do with

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what constitutes journalism in America today—not even television journalism.

It has, on the other hand, everything to do with what constitutes womanhood—especially television womanhood. Television womanhood is easy on the eye and gentle on the brain. As best the network can determine, the morning show's female audience is largely middle-aged—"particularly female viewers of the second half of the program," says one CBSer, "which contains a lot of soft news."

Of course the casual viewer could be excused for not perceiving any difference at all between either kind of news on either half of the show. But CBS, rather touchingly, still insists on drawing that distinction. And CBS believes that women of a certain age who do not have to rush out to work will sit back, soak in the warm froth, and relate to Phyllis, who is 35 and has a husband who became a multimillionaire on Kentucky Fried Chicken.

To those who deride her ability to identify with the common woman, Phyllis has a ready response. "I'm a nice person. I still go to church. Also I've grown and grown and grown and grown," she told one interviewer. "I didn't stay that little girl. I grew. I learned how to do my hair and put a little highlight in it. And I learned how to do makeup. You know, I learned that."

These are not idle boasts. She looks, as most of us do not, extremely good in the morning, her eyes shining with merriment, Murine, and mascara, her lips as glossy as a new car. Can we really be surprised at the emphasis she places on cosmetics when it is precisely her expertise with blush-on that brought her to such expensive journalism? Should we be astonished that she projects a few of her own obsessions onto some of her subjects?

"Has your beauty," she inquired solicitously of San Francisco's mayor Dianne Feinstein, "ever been a detriment to you politically?"

Network personnel gallantly rush to her defense. She has that effect. On men. "I think Phyllis George got a poisonous amount of criticism precisely because she's a woman," declares Jon Katz, the show's executive producer. He is not alone in his desire to shield her from the slings and arrows of outraged journalists. The CBS brass reportedly love her. You can almost see why.

Watching her, a corporate husband might be excused for harboring only the most serious intentions. Phyllis is not a one-night stand. She is cozy. She is bubbly. She is Good Night Gracie in the morning. Why, even the executive producer of the "Today" show thinks she can make it, for heaven's sake. Phyllis, he has said, "has star quality. She can light up and fill the screen."

Imagine how good that makes the people at CBS feel. "We are in this for the long haul," one staffer declares ominously, "and we are very optimistic."

JUDY BACHRACH

Judy Bachrach is a Washington freelance writer.

THE PRESIDENT AS PUNDIT

No More Vietnams
by Richard Nixon

(Arbor House, 246 pp., $14.95)

For the moment America is blessed with an abundance of former presidents. Of the three available, which would you most like to meet? To make the question more pointed: which of these men would you *pay* to have dinner with? Gerald Ford? Let's be serious. It is a small but disheartening illustration of the decay of modern capitalism that so many corporations have put up good money to have him sit on their boards. Jimmy Carter? Perhaps, were it not for the suspicion that, through his confessional interviews and speeches, he has already opened his private dramas to public display. That leaves . . . Richard Nixon.

For most people he is the obvious choice. Whom else would David Frost have paid for the rights to an interview? (Who else would have asked for a fee?) Like Lyndon Johnson, Nixon has for some reason always chosen to conceal his canniness and sophistication beneath a wooden, unbelievable public mask. To listen to Nixon's half-bitter, half-pious speeches was torture, but to have a chance to see the subject of *Nixon Agonistes* in private, to watch him work all the registers and hear him talk as he did on the Watergate tapes ("Who gives a [expletive] about the lira!")—for anyone interested in politics or psychology, that would be ecstasy.

UNFORTUNATELY this is not the Richard Nixon we encounter in *No More Vietnams*. The book can probably best be thought of as a very long speech, reminiscent of Nixon's "pitiful helpless giant" acceptance speech at the 1968 convention and his televised announcement of the Cambodian incursion in 1970. It is like a speech in its sloganeering language, the low premium it places on detailed argument, and the black-and-white nature of its moral view. It is less personally revealing than Nixon's first book, *Six Crises*, and less forth-coming than his presidential memoirs, *RN*. Except for occasional patches where Nixon drops the mask and talks frankly, it sounds less intelligent than its author undoubtedly is. (The frank-sounding exceptions mainly come in small asides, such as this lesson in political science: "Diem, having imposed order, faced the second task of government: securing the consent of the governed.")

Nixon's real purpose in this book seems to be to vindicate his handling of the war in Vietnam, which he oversaw for a longer period than any other president. To that end, he attempts to argue that the United States had "won" the war by the time the Paris peace treaties were signed in January 1973, only to see victory evaporate in the following two and a half years, as Congress denied South Vietnamese government the arms and money it needed to hold off the North Vietnamese and denied Nixon the right to re-intervene on South Vietnam's behalf (and eventually the right to hold office at all). The attempt to intervene in Vietnam, Nixon says, was a noble one. Our only sin was failure. He ends the book by saying, "In Vietnam we tried and failed in a just cause. 'No more Vietnams' can mean that we will not *try* again. It *should* mean that we will not *fail* again."

It's hard to disagree with that final sentence, or with several of Nixon's

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other contentions. Life in Southeast Asia has been worse these last ten years, especially in Cambodia, than most American opponents of the war were willing to predict. Of course the supposed attractions of life under the North Vietnamese or the Khmer Rouge never constituted the major case against American involvement in the war, any more than the imagined glories of life under the Soviet Union are what keep us from sending off the 82nd Airborne to liberate Poland tomorrow. Still, as the war itself marked the end of an innocent time for the United States, the aftermath denies the antiwar movement a sense of innocence about its positions. It was better for the United States that we were out of the war, but it was worse for a lot of people in Southeast Asia.

Nixon is also right in claiming that in at least two major instances, apart from a thousand minor ones, the United States betrayed vulnerable people who had come to rely on it. We did so first in 1963, when the Kennedy administration tacitly assented to the murder of Ngo Dinh Diem, thereby acquiring some moral responsibility for whatever happened next, and again between 1973 and 1975, when we detached ourselves from Vietnamese and Cambodians who in our absence faced almost certain defeat. The first episode, in my view, constituted America's original sin in Vietnam; the second was essential to our own political stability. Each was part of the disaster that befell Vietnam.

BUT IT IS hard to move from these premises to Nixon's conclusion that therefore we should have toughed it out indefinitely in Vietnam. In this book he paints himself into the same corner in which Norman Podhoretz found himself trapped when defending the war in his book of two years ago, *Why We Were in Vietnam*. Podhoretz agreed that the American effort was so politically, militarily, and strategically flawed that it was indeed doomed to fail—but he excoriated those who opposed it because, he said, the intentions behind it had been honorable and moral. (Would it be any less honorable to mount an invasion of Afghanistan? Would it be any more practical?)

Similarly, Nixon concedes most of the criticisms about the way the war was waged, and agrees that the North Vietnamese brought more conviction to the fighting than either we or the South Vietnamese did.

> Our armed forces were expert at mobilizing huge resources, orchestrating logistic support, and deploying enormous firepower. In Vietnam, these skills led them to fight the war *their* way, rather than developing the new skills required to defeat the new kind of enemy they faced. . . . We became caught between our desire to limit the war and our talent for waging unlimited war. As a result our armed forces ended up fighting a war for which we were not suited, with tactics that were not suited to it.

The implication of nearly every specific comment Nixon makes about the war is that the fighting was bound to drag on until the United States finally decided it had enough. But none of this convinces him that the United States should not have been involved. Instead he is left defending some idealized version of the Vietnam War, fought by a different kind of army and supported by a different kind of electorate (much as some Marxists brush off the actual failures of the Soviet Union by discussing the glorious potential of some ideal socialist state).

NIXON'S history of our involvement in Vietnam is punctuated by a long series of "fundamental" or "tragic" or "fatal" errors, each one of which, he says, diminished our chances for success. Yet from them he draws the conclusion that we should in each case have persevered. Our tragic error was not to have bombed in support of the French at Dien Bien Phu ("the United States lost its last chance to stop the expansion of communism in Southeast Asia at little cost to itself"). Or it was to have encouraged and then abandoned the Hungarian uprising in 1956, or not to have attacked North Vietnam directly in 1961. ("[This] first error probably doomed us to follow the wrong path, but we sealed our fate by committing three more.") John Kennedy made the crucial error when he withdrew air cover for the Bay of Pigs landing in 1961 and agreed to the assassination of Diem. What slim chances we still had were reduced when Lyndon Johnson went into the war on the sly, and did not mobilize the reserves ("we took our most fateful step into the quicksand . . . it was the greatest political error this master politician ever made"), and did not bomb the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and saw the war in military rather than political terms, and overestimated our progress before the Tet attack, and suspended the bombing in 1968. And on and on, right through March of 1975, when President Thieu made an "enormous" and "tragic" error by ordering his forces to withdraw in the face of the onrushing North Vietnamese rather than to resist. How many "fatal" errors does it take before a policy can be pronounced dead?

THE logical structure of the book is not improved by its literary presentation. Especially in the first half of the book, where Nixon is setting out his general geopolitical principles and unkindly reviewing his predecessors' records, the language is like that of bombastic speeches rather than of books. It is mawkish: "The overwhelming majority of those who received the Medal of Honor came from modest backgrounds. Many would call them 'common men.' " It is snappy: "Hanoi's definition of a cease-fire was that we cease and they fire." It is florid: "[Stalin] began scanning the world for possible Communist conquests like a vulture searching for fresh carcasses." It groans under "picturesque" constructions: "The outstretched hand of diplomacy will have a very weak grip unless a president holds the scepter of credible military power in his other hand." It makes you wish that Theodore Sorensen had never been born: "In Vietnamese tradition, a leader should win power by his virtue, but the Communists sought to control by virtue of their power."

Having been a president apparently relieves an author of such annoying burdens as evidence and attribution. *No More Vietnams* is one of those books that claim that *everything* you've heard about a certain topic is wrong, but in rebutting the conventional wisdom Nixon relies heavily on the "Absolute rubbish!" argumentative technique. "The idea that Ho Chi Minh was primarily a Vietnamese nationalist has no basis in fact." "The issue of religious repression was a complete fabrication." "Some critics later contended that the secret bombing [of Cambodia] was an illegal abuse of presidential power. There was no substance to this charge."

There are no footnotes in the book and practically no indications of where Nixon has found the quotations, numbers, and Reagan-style improbable anecdotes on which he builds his case. He

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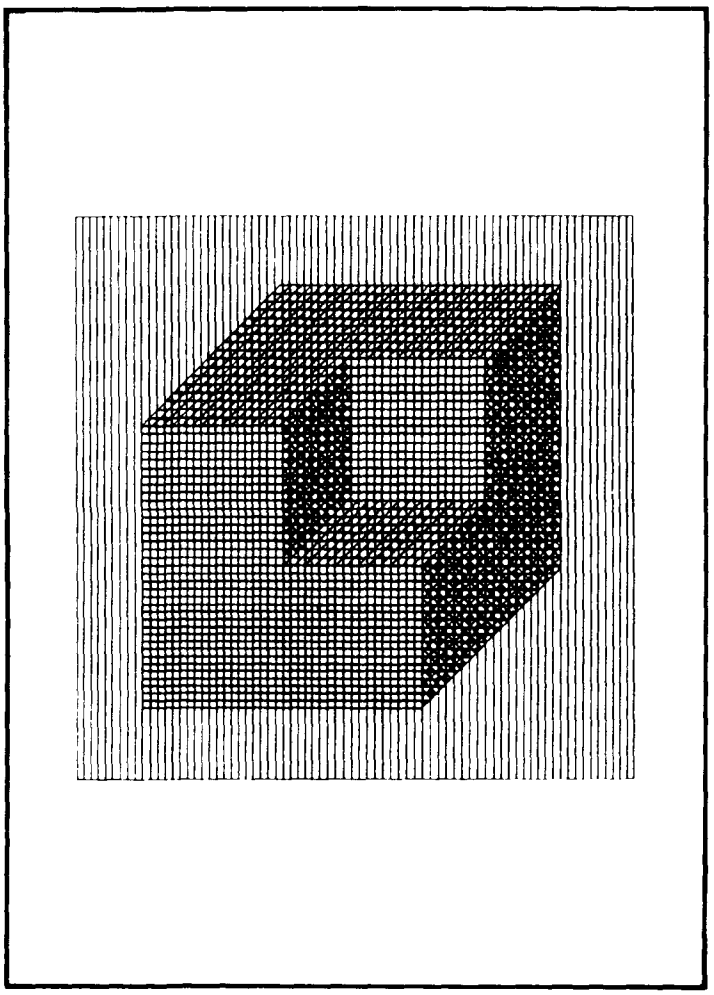

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tells us that during the antiwar protests "students shot at firemen and policemen, held college administrators hostage at knifepoint, stormed university buildings with shotguns in hand." Really? At knifepoint and with shotguns? Even in the jaded 1960s this would have been big news. Presumably Nixon must have had some piece of paper in front of him when he wrote about those student uprisings, or about Ho Chi Minh's guiding maxim, "It is better to kill ten innocent people than to let one enemy escape." Would it have been so much beneath the dignity of a former president to let his readers know where he got his facts?

ONE illustration of Nixon's use of facts deserves special attention. Last year Admiral James B. Stockdale, who endured nearly eight years of torture as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam, published *In Love and War*, his autobiography. His recollections were significant not simply because of his time as a POW but also because, on the night of August 4, 1964, Stockdale had been flying a mission over the Gulf of Tonkin. It was on that night that the U.S.S. *Turner Joy* and *Maddox* were said to have been attacked by North Vietnamese PT boats, in the incident that gave rise to the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. Stockdale was in a fighter plane that had been launched from a nearby aircraft carrier and was flying directly above the *Turner Joy* and *Maddox*, attempting to locate and destroy the PT boats. In his book he says that during three hours of being as close to the scene as anyone possibly could be, he did not see a trace of the enemy PTs.

"Did you see any boats?" he was asked in a debriefing as soon as he finished his flight. He said, "Not a one. No boats, no boat wakes, no ricochets off boat, no boat gunfire, no torpedo wakes—nothing but black sea and American firepower." Then Stockdale picked up the transcript of the running comments from the commodore on the *Maddox*, and found that by the end of the evening he had backed off the idea that his ship had ever been attacked:

> There was . . . the mention of overeager sonar operators, the lack of any visual sightings of boats by the destroyer, and finally there were lines expressing doubt that there had been *any boats out there that night at all*. The commodore urged a complete evaluation of the mixup before any further action be taken.

Stockdale thought that a military showdown was coming in Vietnam, but when he heard a few hours later that LBJ was ordering "reprisal" raids—which Stockdale himself flew—his reaction was that "we were about to launch a war under false pretenses, in the face of the on-scene military advice to the contrary." A few days later he read with incredulity the accounts of the "great sea battle of the night of August 4" that were published in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Life*. How does Nixon dispose of these conflicting reports? With a wave of the hand: "While some respected military observers have questioned whether the attack took place, I have concluded that it did and there is no credible evidence that we provoked it."

Nixon's preference for sweeping assertion is probably most important in the part of his argument that most affects his own record: his assertion that, despite all the fatal errors previously mentioned, he had "won" the war in 1973 only to see it lost through the shortsightedness of Congress. Nixon's claim of victory depends on two subsidiary points: that as of the Paris peace treaty, the South Vietnamese army was fit and willing to put up a prolonged fight; and that the American citizenry was prepared to intervene again if the North Vietnamese broke the rules.

AS Don Oberdorfer has pointed out in *The Washington Post*, Nixon sounded much less optimistic about South Vietnam's military prospects in his earlier, franker book of memoirs. The memoirs contained an extract from his personal diary, from 1972: "The real problem is that the enemy is willing to sacrifice in order to win, while the South Vietnamese simply aren't wiling to pay that much of a price to avoid losing." President Nguyen Van Thieu of South Vietnam resisted the peace agreement, appropriately fearful that the United States would use it as a vehicle for its long-desired escape from Vietnam. In his new book Nixon portrays the effort to persuade Thieu as a genteel undertaking; but Oberdorfer quotes a passage from Henry Kissinger's memoirs that reported Nixon as saying, "Brutality is nothing. You have never seen it if this son-of-a-bitch doesn't go along, believe me."

Even more unrealistic and implausible is Nixon's assertion that after ten years of horrendously divisive conflict the U.S. could have been expected to intervene at any moment with bombs or troops. He says that the peace agreement "was adequate to ensure the survival of South Vietnam—as long as the United States stood ready to enforce its terms." That is, the plan would succeed as long as the United States stood ready to be a different kind of country from what it is—a fractious democracy with no tradition of fighting drawn-out, colonial wars. Destructive as the consequences may have been, it is probably not surprising that so many presidents should have misjudged the kind of enemy they confronted and the kind of war they were in. The surprise is that politicians as skillful as John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon should have so misjudged their own nation, the strains it could bear and those it could not.

ONE PART OF *No More Vietnams* is out of character with all the rest. For the first 220 pages or so Nixon frequently talks about the use of power, which in America's case might range from economic leverage to gunboat diplomacy to moral suasion to military force. But when Nixon says "power," he means military power, and he laments that Vietnam has left us hesitant to commit our own troops. Then, at the end of the book, he suddenly offers a very different vision of "security" and "power." In his final chapter Nixon argues that the real threat to peace will arise in the Third World—the speech writer in him cannot resist calling this "the Third World war"—and recommends that the United States undertake a mammoth effort, like the Marshall Plan, to encourage development in poorer nations. (The Central American conundrum seems to be reminding many people of the Marshall Plan.) We are spending too much on arms, he says; we must spend more on aid, and crack down on the Japanese to make sure that they do the same.

The relief of world poverty is certainly a worthy cause. The difference in political stability between the countries of Central America and the noncommunist nations of Southeast Asia suggests that when an economy is improving, social pressures are easier to contain. But where is the hardheadedness for which Nixon is famous? Where is the scorn he displayed in the 1950s and 1960s for the fainthearted liberals who claimed that the best weapon against communism was not bullets but

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bread? Nixon has appropriated the liberal argument before, but my own uncharitable suspicion is that this time he has used it for mainly rhetorical reasons. No matter how much demagoguery has gone before, a speech can still be made "statesmanlike" with an ending full of uplift and vision about this great nation's ability to meet the challenges of a dawning age. Thus Richard Nixon concludes this speech, still leaving us eager for something off-the-record.

JAMES FALLOWS

James Fallows is the Washington editor of *The Atlantic*.

THE CHURCH GOES TO CHINA

The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci
by Jonathan D. Spence

(Viking, 350 pp., $19.95)

In the 16th century a Spanish missionary who had repeatedly failed in his attempts to enter China concluded that such an endeavor was akin to trying to reach the moon. In fact, reaching the moon proved to be a much easier task—and also a far less interesting one. Whereas the exploration of our dead satellite is a mere technological venture that can yield only scientific data, a true spiritual encounter between the West and China not only would provide mankind with a deeper understanding and knowledge of itself, it might even ensure that our planet enjoys a civilized future.

The unique fascination that China exerts upon all those who come into contact with it can be compared in a way to the attraction between the opposite sexes: although it is often described with a florid imagery that suggests romance, magic, and mystery, it rests upon a very basic and obvious fact. From a Western point of view, China is simply the other pole of the human mind. All the other great cultures are either dead (Egypt, pre-Columbian America, and so on), or too exclusively absorbed by the problem of surviving in extreme conditions (primitive cultures), or too close to us (Islamic cultures, India) to present a contrast as total, a revelation as complete, an "otherness" as challenging, an originality as illuminating as China. It is only when we contemplate China that we can become exactly aware of our own identity and that we begin to perceive which part of our heritage truly pertains to universal humanity, and which part merely reflects Indo-European idiosyncrasies.

In a sense, the Catholic missionaries who brought the Gospel to the four corners of the earth in the wake of the great journeys of discovery in the time of the Renaissance should have been well equipped to meet the challenge of the Chinese cultural revelation. They knew that all men were equally God's children, and since they had already been able to witness how, by an accident of history, the Jewish God had come to borrow Roman garb, they should have been quite prepared to accept that he might now adopt with equal ease a clothing even more exotic.

Unfortunately, most of them failed to match their belief in the universality of human nature with an awareness of the relativity of their own culture. Since the West had become Christian, they generally assumed that to be a Christian one ought to be a Westerner. In practice, Asians who wished to be baptized first had to be turned into honorary Spaniards or Portuguese. Evangelization became a side-product of colonization.

The consequences of this attitude could be nowhere more disastrous than in China, since the Ming dynasty, by the 16th century, had developed an equally dangerous misconception. Originally the Chinese order had been conceived as a mere stepping-stone, a mediation between the individual and the world in the pursuit of a universal humanist harmony. Still, for various geopolitical and historical reasons, the Chinese eventually found it more convenient to decide that China was the

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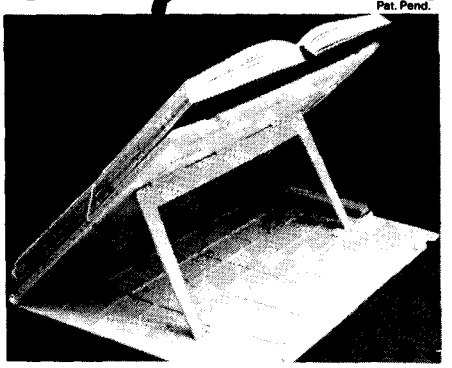

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world, after all; and in order to prevent reality from upsetting such a view, they had the outside world carefully and effectively fenced out.

Thus, whereas Western missionaries were ascribing universal relevance to their particular values (the God-speaks-Latin syndrome), China denied that the world actually extended beyond her own borders (the Great Wall syndrome). In such a situation, the early missionaries were naturally doomed to be ignored.

IT FINALLY fell to an Italian Jesuit, Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), to effect the first breakthrough and implant Christianity in China. The story of his endeavors, of the intellectual exchanges and the friendships that he established with illustrious members of the Chinese scholarly elite, the subsequent growth of a Chinese Church, and the dramatic setbacks that were to endanger it in later centuries, constitute one of the most intriguing episodes in the history of civilization.

By modern standards, Ricci's life was a heroic adventure. In the 16th century, to sail to the other end of the world was a risky undertaking. Anyway, in the best of circumstances, the missionaries who survived this ordeal were not supposed ever to return home—normally they would live and die in the remote countries where they had been sent. All the emotional and spiritual links that they retained with their relatives, friends, superiors, and colleagues in Europe were entirely dependent upon the vagaries of a mail that could take years to reach its destination—if it reached it at all. A lifetime of hardships, trials, and dangers of all kinds awaited the lonely priests on strange and sometimes hostile shores. Yet if Ricci's saintliness, courage, faith, resilience, and resourcefulness may appear superhuman to us today, these virtues were by no means exceptional among the early Jesuit missionaries. What distinguished him from his colleagues was a unique combination of subtler qualities that enabled him to succeed where they had repeatedly failed.

Ricci was a gentleman and a scholar. He was highly cultured—in both literary and scientific fields—and had exquisite manners. He was a man of God, but he was also very shrewd, a born diplomat, tactful and inventive, able to gauge situations, to judge and to handle people. He was a great artist in human relations—an art that Chinese society had brought to perfection. Being Italian (from the Papal Domain), he had inherited the best of a glorious and sophisticated cultural tradition, without having to carry the burden of imperial-nationalist hangovers from which Spaniards and Portuguese were seldom free. For the Chinese (as for the French) any new idea, in order to be taken seriously, must not only be expressed in their own language, but it must also be expressed with literary elegance.

Ricci was able to meet this requirement because his mastery of Chinese language and culture was not merely the product of an intellectual effort, but also the result of a living commitment. He discovered that in order to convert China to Christianity he should first convert himself to China. The refinement of his mind combined with a true genius for friendship won him an amazing popularity among Chinese intellectual circles. Another Jesuit who was his companion described the impression he made:

> Incredible is the reputation which good Father Ricci enjoys among the Chinese and the extent to which he is visited by important personages and esteemed throughout the whole empire of China. They say that there cannot be another man in Europe equal to him. And when we say that others are more gifted than he, they cannot believe it. In truth, he captivates everyone by the graciousness and suavity of his manners, by his conversation and by the solid virtue which his life exhibits.

The accuracy of this description is confirmed by an unimpeachable Chinese witness. Li Zhi, one of the most original Chinese thinkers of all times, a flamboyant figure and also a man of unbending integrity, was fascinated by Ricci's personality and visited him several times. Later he reported in a letter to a friend:

> Ricci has read all our classics. He speaks our language to perfection, writes our characters and knows how to conform to our social usages. He is a truly remarkable man. He is utterly refined, but his appearance is of great simplicity. In the middle of a noisy and boisterous gathering of people where everyone is shouting and arguing, he maintains an imperturbable composure. He is the most extraordinary man I ever met. Other people either are too rigid or too lax; either they wish to make a display of their wit, or they are dull—they all are his inferiors. However, I still do not understand why he came to China. I really cannot believe that he would actually want to substitute his own doctrine to the Confucian teachings. This would be too absurd! He must have some other purpose.

Li Zhi unwittingly pinpointed the paradox of Ricci's enterprise, its essential absurdity. Ricci himself, whose profound faith was matched with an equal dose of astuteness, was fully aware of the problem. From the very beginning, he saw (to borrow the words of one of his modern biographers, G. H. Dunne) that "the primary task was not to multiply baptisms, but to win for Christianity an accepted place in Chinese life." In order to achieve this objective, he chose to proceed "*suave modo*," as he said, laying the strategic plans that were to secure his success first in southern China, then in Nanking, and finally in Peking: "I do not think that we shall establish a church, but instead a room for discussion and we will say Mass privately in another chapel, because one preaches more effectively and with greater fruit here through conversations than through formal sermons."

"FORMAL SERMONS" were not all that would have prematurely exposed his preposterous design to convert China (so preposterous, in fact, that Li Zhi simply could not believe that a man of his intelligence would seriously contemplate such a project). The Christian doctrine was itself too shocking to bear being directly disclosed to unprepared minds. A long historical familiarity with Christianity has numbed our imagination; we hardly perceive anymore the full horror and scandal that lie at its very heart. On his way to Peking, where he had finally been promised an imperial audience, Ricci was arrested by a greedy official who, looking for loot, had his luggage searched. The search produced a crucifix that, being in the hyperrealistic Spanish style of the time, truly terrified the official. Whoever would travel with such a gruesome object, he thought, must be practicing some kind of evil voodoo—maybe the life of the emperor himself could be endangered by these sinister rituals.

Summoned to provide an explanation, Ricci did not follow the advice of the ebullient and not too subtle Spanish Jesuit who was traveling with him, and who would have liked to put up a heroic show—the Spaniard, indeed, wished to proclaim that "this was the true God, creator of heaven and earth, whom all

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the world must adore; who for our sins and to give us life, died and then rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven." Instead Ricci wisely refrained from disclosing the exact identity of the Crucified and merely said, "This was a great saint who had wished to suffer for us the pain of the Cross, and that for this reason we made sculptured and painted representations of him in order to have him before our eyes so that we may be grateful for so great a benefit."

SOME zealots reproached him for his prudence and diplomatic flexibility, as they would also reproach him for some of his associations; Ricci sometimes pursued friendships for friendship's sake with endearing rakes who offered no hope for conversion since they felt unable to amend their way of life (though some of them finally converted and became admirable Christians). Actually, Ricci could have invoked authoritative precedents. Wasn't he spontaneously imitating Christ's conviviality? Zealots tend to forget that at Cana, for example, when Jesus began his public activity, the very first thing he did was to provide more wine to revelers who had already drunk more than their share; and in choosing his friends, he too gave respectable people much cause for scandal.

The psychological observation made by Claude Roy in another context—"I do not believe in what my friend believes, but I believe in my friend"—could perhaps apply here to some extent, and help us to understand how so many Chinese intellectuals could be attracted to Christianity mostly because of Ricci's exceptional personality. Of course, to describe their attitude in such terms should by no means detract from the value and the meaning of their conversions. Again, Christ himself did not proceed differently: for a long time he postponed revealing the essential part of his doctrine, knowing all too well that it would prove a stumbling block to most of his followers. After he finally told a gathering of enthusiastic supporters that they would have to eat his flesh and drink his blood, nearly everyone left him, in shock and disgust. At that juncture only a tiny group of friends remained with him, not because they had a better understanding of what he meant (actually they felt equally dismayed by his aberrant suggestion), but simply because they loved him.

Still, after Ricci's death, there was a

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strong backlash. In their eagerness to bridge the enormous gap between two traditions that were so utterly alien to each other, the Jesuits had often been tempted to build hastily upon artificial similarities—for instance, the Chinese concept of "Heaven" was all too quickly assimilated to the Christian God. For their part, missionaries were all the more tempted to point to such parallels as the strong common ground that they found between Christian and Confucian ethics. Moreover, at first the warm and charismatic personality of Ricci himself unwittingly contributed to mask some fundamental differences. After his death, however, an awareness of the seriousness of the doctrinal difficulties began to develop on both sides. The concepts of creation, fall, incarnation, and redemption all occasioned considerable problems of communication. More essential, the idea of a transcendent, personal God could hardly be reconciled with the Chinese conception of an immanent force of cosmic transformation.

RICCI accurately saw—and it remains his most momentous contribution—that the question of how China could become Christian was first the question of how Christianity should become Chinese. In practice, however, in spite of all his efforts, his theology remained inevitably encumbered with a number of narrowly Western notions, and these, once transported into a Chinese context, appeared utterly arbitrary, or presented insoluble problems of translation. For instance, Western ontology is entirely predicated upon a bizarre linguistic accident that is found only in Indo-European languages, where one same expression, "to be," happens simultaneously to fulfill functions and meanings (essence, existence, identity) that normally are sharply differentiated in most other languages. Thus, when translated into Chinese, Thomas Aquinas's ontological proof of the existence of God (not to mention Hamlet's soliloquy!) appears merely to be a pun that doesn't work. Medieval scholastic philosophy is a monument as sublime as the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe, but it is equally unfit for transplantation. This could hardly have been perceived, of course, 400 years ago.

The anti-Christian reaction that developed in late Ming and early Qing time was at first purely intellectual. It was soon to be aggravated by the rivalries and quarrels among the various missionary societies; and these, in turn, provoked a political reaction, and China came close to rejecting Christianity altogether. After the sorry interlude of the 19th century, when the new growth of the Church was directly tied to the encroachments of Western imperialism, the 20th century finally witnessed a return to Ricci's original vision: the development of a Catholic Church that would be faithful both to the successors of Peter and to its own Chinese identity.

The establishment of the Communist regime was soon followed by a cruel persecution of all Christians. Catholics fared worst because of their fidelity to the spiritual authority of the pope. Nearly all the Chinese Jesuits were thrown into jails and labor camps as early as the 1950s; a few were briefly released during the phony "liberalization" that followed Mao's death, but now most of them have already been rearrested. Ricci did not labor in vain after all. Today the unwavering faith of his spiritual sons bears testimony to the saintliness of Chinese Catholicism and already heralds its future blossoming. For the last 36 years, China under Marxism-Leninism was subjected to the tyranny of a Christian idea gone mad—paradoxically, this very ordeal seems to have given her citizens a genuine and secret thirst for the real thing. Young people who were force-fed with Communist ideology are now developing a new curiosity and desire for religion.

THE Jesuits' interpretation of Chinese culture, the Chinese response to Christianity, and the philosophical misunderstandings that developed on both sides are a complex and fascinating topic. It was the subject of a masterly study by the leading French sinologist and historian Jacques Gernet, *Chine et Christianisme: Action et Réaction*. The book is based on primary sources—early Jesuit reports, original Chinese pamphlets pro and against Christianity. It is a work of penetrating intelligence and a model of scholarship. Nonspecialist readers should enjoy it without any difficulty, as it is written with clarity and elegance, and addresses a topic that should be of immediate concern to any thinking person. It is hoped that such a fundamental work shall soon be translated into English.

On Ricci himself, there were at least two readable and competent biographies. Vincent Cronin's *The Wise Man from the West* is good, but geared toward a more popular audience. G. H. Dunne's *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty* is better; it provides scholarly information as well as stimulating interpretations.

NOW there is Jonathan Spence's *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*. I confess that I find it difficult to assign it a precise place alongside these earlier studies. The problem that Gernet analyzed is entirely ignored by Spence (strangely enough, Gernet's book is not even mentioned in Spence's bibliography). This is a serious failing. Compared with the two earlier biographers, moreover, Spence does not really provide new information, but he presents it in a very original arrangement. Whereas the other writers narrated Ricci's story in a conventional sequence, i.e., beginning with the beginning and ending with the end, Spence tells it in jumbled fashion. Although this life is divided in nine chapters, Ricci dies as early as chapter five—a chapter that is also devoted to his early education. Later chapters deal with other aspects of his activity and earlier chapters are concerned with later episodes, which themselves are not set in chronological—or logical—order. The method is very new, and somewhat perplexing. If you wish to check again some specific passage that caught your attention on your first reading, but you forgot to make a particular note of the page number, there is no hope that you will ever find it, unless you read the whole book all over—a rather inconvenient procedure.

Professor Spence has already written several brilliant books. He is the Picasso of Chinese studies: he invented the sinological collage. He scavenges in the junkyard of history, retrieves odd bits and pieces, and fits them into amazing new shapes; with deft scissors, he cuts scraps of information here and there, and pastes them together to create surprising, fresh patterns. Thus the formal pretext on which the complex architecture of this *Memory Palace* is essentially based was borrowed from one passage in a little treatise on mnemotechnics, which Ricci wrote in Chinese (*Xiguo Jifa*, chapter 2). Ricci was endowed with a phenomenal memory and used to entertain his Chinese friends with his astounding skills. The

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audience would provide him with a series of characters—hundreds of them, written on a piece of paper in meaningless, random sequence. Ricci would read this nonsensical list once, and then repeat it from memory, in its exact original order, from beginning to end, and then again from end to beginning. Such a talent was immensely valued among Chinese scholars, as memory skills played a crucial part in the civil service examinations.

Hence Ricci was constantly pressed to explain and teach his technique, and eventually he wrote a small treatise on the subject in Chinese. For the sake of demonstration, in one of the many examples that are provided in his booklet, Ricci proposes an arbitrary sequence of four disconnected words and shows how memory can link them together and retain an imaginary grasp upon them. These words in turn were used by Spence to set the basic successive themes of Ricci's biography. But this very original idea is of doubtful practical value. Would a biography of Pascal gain much by applying itself to reduplicate the formal structure of his *Treatise on Atmospheric Pressure* or of his *Experiments on the Vacuum*? Furthermore, the words that in Spence's study come to occupy such a key position were by definition purely random and meaningless from Ricci's point of view. With such a method, we could as well try to extrapolate the decisive dates of Professor Spence's life from the digits of his phone number. Or he himself might attempt to compose his next historical essay in acrostic verses.

Having imposed such extraordinary manneristic constraints upon himself, the fact that he still managed to write a book that remains readable, and even attractive in some respects, represents not a mean achievement—but, of course, Professor Spence's cultural and literary skills are considerable. Still, his very talent may be his own worst enemy. The life of Ricci is so gripping a story that even a pedestrian scribbler could write a most magnificent book, were he simply to tell it straightforwardly from A to Z. It took a very clever man indeed to reduce it to the proportions of a bibelot, or a mere literary game.

SIMON LEYS

Simon Leys is the author of *Chinese Shadows* (Viking).

THE STATE AND THE SOUL

The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America by Richard John Neuhaus

(William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 275 pp., $16.95)

The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundations of Modern Liberalism by John P. Diggins

(Basic Books, 409 pp., $23.95)

"If people want a sense of purpose," Harold Macmillan once said, "they should get it from their archbishops." Not politics but religion is the realm of moral meaning, he thought; and most modern political philosophy agrees. Politics is about power and interests, not moral improvement. Asking the state to attend to the soul is asking for trouble.

Liberal statecraft refuses soulcraft for the sake of freedom. Individuals should be free to choose their own ends, without the intrusion of the state. Politics should implement our values, not elevate them. It should take us as we come. And American public life, more than most, embodies this liberal vision. It builds a "wall of separation" between church and state. It bases government on fair procedures, not common purposes. It resolves, in short, to do with-

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out the two traditional sources of political authority—the republican ideal of civic virtue, which orients citizens to the common good, and the religious ideal of a higher law of transcendent meaning.

But can democracy sustain itself without these traditional moral resources? Can we govern ourselves without cultivating a common life larger than our private projects? Much in our recent political experience suggests that we cannot. In different ways, both Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan appealed to the vague but pervasive hunger for a public life of larger meanings. Carter promised a government as good as the people, and Reagan, despite his individualistic, libertarian ideology, skillfully evokes the communal themes of family and neighborhood, patriotism and religion. Meanwhile, the fundamentalist right assails the separation of politics and religion, and calls for a Christian America.

More troubling even than the intolerance of the Moral Majority is the incompetence of the liberal rejoinder. Too often the liberal replies simply that mixing religion and politics is illegitimate, a violation of the separation of church and state. But surely the separation of religion and politics is as foreign to the American tradition as the separation of church and state is familiar. Except on the bleakest of technocratic visions, political questions are inescapably moral questions, and therefore they are potentially religious questions as well. Indeed, it may well be the moral emptiness of recent political discourse that has left American politics vulnerable to the extreme appeals of the fundamentalist right.

This is the condition Richard John Neuhaus aptly describes, in the title of his book, as "the naked public square," a public life that excludes "religion and religiously grounded values from the conduct of public business." Neuhaus, a Lutheran minister who was active in the antiwar movement of the 1960s, writes as a sympathetic critic of the Moral Majority. By its attack on the liberal secular state, the fundamentalist right has "kicked a tripwire," he suggests, alerting us to the dangers of the naked public square. And while "those who have set off the alarm are at the heart of what is alarming," the Moral Majority may ironically offer the occasion for "renewing the very democratic idea it so largely despises."

Whether the occasion is seized or lost depends on how the defenders of democracy respond to the challenge, Neuhaus contends. So far, that response has been mostly confused. Liberals have been unable to articulate the moral basis of the pluralism they defend. Norman Lear's organization People For The American Way, for example, sought to combat intolerance with a television commercial showing different actors declaring how they liked their eggs cooked. Some liked them scrambled, some poached, others fried. The moral of the story was a paean to pluralism: to each his own. "That's the American way!"

THE suggestion that moral convictions, like scrambled eggs, are a matter of taste is more a caricature of pluralism than a defense of it. But it dramatizes an assumption common to much liberal argument—that religious values are ultimately private and subjective, and hence out of place in public life. Neuhaus thinks liberals are mistaken to embrace this assumption, for two reasons. First, the great liberal causes of the 1960s, civil rights and the antiwar movement, drew powerfully on religious values, most memorably in the politics of Martin Luther King Jr. In fact, when civil rights were at stake, Neuhaus notes, the sides were reversed. Then it was Jerry Falwell who opposed mixing religion and politics. "Believing in the Bible as I do," Falwell declared in 1965, "I would find it impossible to stop preaching the pure saving Gospel of Jesus Christ, and begin doing anything else—including fighting communism, or participating in civil rights reform. . . . Preachers are not called to be politicians but to be soul winners."

Second, even if the naked public square were desirable, it would not be sustainable. A public life empty of moral meaning is "a vacuum waiting to be filled," whether by the "vulgarized

A Coyote Runs Across My Path At Midnight In The Pine Loop Campground At Grand Canyon

If you drink your tea by the light,
gnats and mosquitoes dive in
and drown, but if you drink in the dark
you might swallow something you failed
to see. We cook in this dark,
autumn humming nearer, ants and opalescent
beetles gathering stores fallen
from our meal. Summer and we summer people
use everything, the very air. Water
sleeps in the rocks here and the taps
trickle over our soapy plates,
the forks we pack away. We cook
with melted ice from the cooler. All day
we watched hawks and ravens
give themselves like children
to the arms of air. I touched my daughter's
hair, it hurt my throat
to see the miles of space between
that soaring and its shadow.

Something wakes me, singing
at a distant fire, something cold
pressed against my back through cotton duck
and down, sharp as teeth, sharp
and unexpected as the kitten's needle
bite. Deep in the rock
a shelf of ice splintering me from sleep
as if a storm had torn the night
and I fell in. The tent a dome
over a sullen desert and its own
drab sky. My foot on the path,
the city of sleeping campers in their
blue tents, red tents, like a field of tulips.
Stars, stars, point of view: I can feel
light on my shoulders like a shawl,
civilizing my hair, when the first coyote
lopes across my path in the circle
of light, smiling over her shoulder. Wouldn't
I be an enlightened woman if I were star-
blessed every night? The second coyote
saunters by and does not notice me at all.

Carol Henrie

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moralism" of the fundamentalist right or by the "militant secularism" of the modern state. We have already witnessed the first, and, according to Neuhaus, we are dangerously vulnerable to the second. If the public square is "not clothed with the 'meanings' borne by religion, new 'meanings' will be imposed by virtue of the ambitions of the modern state." Since government "cannot help but make moral judgments of an ultimate nature," it must, absent explicit religious bearings, "make those judgments by 'secular' reasoning that is given the force of religion." In this, Neuhaus sees the specter of modern totalitarianism. Without religion as a mediating force, the individual is left to confront the state alone, and "the political threatens to encompass everything."

NEUHAUS concludes that democracy's best answer to the Moral Majority is not to flee moral and religious discourse, but to engage it. Otherwise, the most strident, intolerant voices will be left with a monopoly on the deepest sources of moral and political authority.

Neuhaus's book offers a telling critique of the awkward attempts by secular liberals to answer the challenge of the fundamentalist right. It is less convincing, however, when it comes to describing what a "renewed democratic discourse" informed by religious values might look like. Neuhaus rightly emphasizes that "those who want to bring religiously based values to bear in public discourse have an obligation to 'translate' those values into terms that are as accessible as possible to those who do not share the same religious grounding." Here, the Catholic bishops' recent statements on abortion, nuclear weapons, and the American economy might offer a clear example—moral argument informed by faith but addressed to the wider community.

But beyond this sensible suggestion, Neuhaus's vision is difficult to discern. He proposes vaguely that religion construct a "sacred canopy" for the American experiment, and speaks oddly interchangeably of the "Judeo-Christian ethic" and just plain "Christianity." We are, in some significant sense, a "Christian people," he writes, and this fact "ought, somehow, to make a difference." Only a politics grounded in the biblical tradition can be morally legitimate in American society.

There is, however, another alternative to the naked public square, a second way to a public life larger than our private pursuits. This way is offered by the civic republican tradition, a public philosophy concerned less with salvation than with citizenship. Unlike the liberal ethic, which would leave individuals to pursue their own interests and ends, the republican ethic seeks to cultivate civic virtue, and to orient citizens to a common good beyond the sum of individual interests.

Recent historians have found that civic republican ideals played an important part in the founding of the American republic. Where Lockean liberalism was once thought to define American political thought, as Louis Hartz argued in the 1950s, historians such as Bernard Bailyn, Gordon Wood, and J. G. A. Pocock have recently shown that our ideological origins include republican ideals as well. Their historical findings have been welcomed by critics of contemporary liberalism, who seek a public life beyond individual interests. If the "republican school" is right about our ideological origins, then perhaps there is hope for revitalizing our public life and restoring a sense of community, without recourse to a "Christian America." Perhaps we can clothe the naked public square not with religion but with civic virtue. So the debate about the meaning of our past carries consequences for the debate

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about present political possibilities.

John Diggins's *The Lost Soul of American Politics* is the latest entry in the debate over America's ideological origins. For those who hope to find civic virtue among our founding ideals, however, he offers disappointing news. Contrary to much contemporary scholarship, Diggins reads classical republicanism out of the American tradition and Lockean liberalism back in. The classical idea of virtue as the subordination of private interests to the public good "was an idea whose time had come and gone by 1787, when the Constitution was framed." Though it figured in the years leading up to the Revolution, republican rhetoric served to denounce the British, not to establish political authority anew. By the time the framers wrote the Constitution, they doubted that politics could elevate man's character, or that government could be an agency of moral education. Though Madison acknowledged that, without virtue among the people, "no form of government can render us secure," he insisted in *The Federalist* on the "necessity of auxilliary precautions"; the Republic would be preserved by the "machinery of government," not the morality of man.

Although the language of virtue persisted in American political discourse from the Jacksonian era to the Civil War, its meaning had changed. "What preoccupied the thoughts of major statesmen from Jackson to Lincoln was not so much the political duty of the citizen as the economic opportunity of the worker and entrepreneur," Diggins writes. In American political thought, "*homo politicus* never replaced *homo faber*"; not politics but labor was the source of dignity and value, a notion congenial to Locke and alien to classical republicanism.

When Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams unsuccessfully proposed a national plan of canals, roads, and scientific observatories, they found that the idea of a national community could inspire no political expression. When Tocqueville inquired into American democracy, he had to account for the presence of liberty in the absence of civic virtue. When, in the 1840s, virtue became a concern of reformers and educators such as Horace Mann, they understood it in moral, not political terms, as a quality of conscience to be cultivated in the schoolroom or the family. And while virtue played a part in abolitionist thought, its meaning came from Christian, not republican sources.

Despite Diggins's vigorous case for a Lockean interpretation of the American past, he does not celebrate liberalism, or even affirm it. To the contrary, he associates liberalism with the unrestrained "drive toward domination and possession," the erosion of community, the loss of political authority, the tendency for ends to absorb means, "wealth to replace work, and the mere possession of things to replace the making of products" while the nation sinks into "a morass of materialism."

WHAT SAVES liberalism from its worst impulses, according to Diggins, is its historic link with Calvinism. In the "agonized conscience" of Lincoln, the Lockean-Calvinist synthesis finds its highest expression. Lincoln replaced classical virtue with Christian virtue. He saw slavery as a "sin" and the Civil War "as something of a blood-sacrifice, punishment foreshadowing atonement." He sought America's first principles not in the Constitution, which preserved slavery, but in the Declaration, which proclaimed the inalienable rights of man. Confronted with civil war, Lincoln knew that, contrary to Madison's expectations, the republic could not be sustained by the "machinery of government" after all. A new source of authority was required, and Lincoln sought it in a "political theology" of Christian conscience, sacrifice, and magnanimity.

After Lincoln, Diggins asserts, America lost its moral vision, a vision we have yet to recover. The Christian values Lincoln had stood for died out in the late 19th century, while the acquisitive side of liberalism proceeded unrestrained. This is what Diggins means by "the lost soul of American politics," a condition he sees persisting in our time. But Diggins offers no advice on how the nation might recover its soul, or the "spiritual ecstasy" he finds in Lincoln's political thought. Nor is an affirmative suggestion easy to infer. Beyond his praise of conscience, anguish, and humility, Diggins never makes clear what he takes the content of the Calvinist political ethic to be.

Still, Diggins's purpose is less to describe than to debunk, to offer a "corrective to the pretensions of American virtue." The importance of his book consists in the challenge it poses

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age by Walter A. McDougall (Basic). The story of the state, the scientists, and the exploitation of the galaxy. (Reviewed 6/3/85)

Women and Angels by Harold Brodkey (The Jewish Publication Society of America). Two ordinary fragments of a long-awaited novel, and a third remarkable one: the portrait of a revelation. (5/20/85)

Acts of Will: The Life and Work of Otto Rank by E. James Lieberman M.D. (Free Press). Another chapter in the history of psychoanalysis. (5/20/85)

Money: A Suicide Note by Martin Amis (Viking). The manic monologue of a man who has everything but is nothing. (5/6/85)

Mountbatten: A Biography by Philip Ziegler (Knopf). The aristocrat as ambitious, accomplished statesman. (5/13/85)

The Call: An American Missionary in China by John Hersey (Knopf). An unsentimental saga of one Christian's half-century in China. (5/13/85)

The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan by Steven L. Spiegel (University of Chicago Press). An exhaustive, objective map of the maneuvers and muddles. (5/13/85)

Shah of Shahs by Ryszard Kapuściński, translated by William R. Brand and Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). A tale of tyranny, set in Iran. (4/8/85)

The Kindness of Strangers: The Life of Tennessee Williams by Donald Spoto (Little, Brown). A thorough life of the carousing playwright. (5/13/85)

Home Truths: Sixteen Stories by Mavis Gallant (Random House). Portraits of Canadians at home and abroad. (5/13/85)

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to contemporary critics of liberalism who would revitalize American public discourse by reclaiming a republican past. For if Diggins is right, America's civic republican soul was lost from the start.

Despite its impressive range—from the Founders to Lincoln, with Emerson, Thoreau, Henry Adams, and Melville in between—Diggins's spirited account is unlikely to put republican aspirations to rest. For one thing, Diggins's polemical style sometimes makes his account one-sided. Thus Tocqueville appears as "the coroner of classical political philosophy . . . inquiring into the causes of the death of the republican tradition in liberal America," with little reference to the vital public life he actually found in the early republic, a public life that served in part as an education in citizenship. "Town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science," Tocqueville wrote. "They bring it within the people's reach, they teach men how to use and how to enjoy it. A nation must establish a free government, but without municipal institutions it cannot have the spirit of liberty." No explicit talk of virtue, perhaps, but surely the suggestion of a richer public life than self-interest can supply.

More generally, Diggins's attempt to read civic virtue out of the American past often depends on methodological claims that are unconvincing in themselves, and also at odds with his own interpretive enterprise. In order to discount the fact that the *language* of virtue persists in American political discourse after the Revolution, he argues repeatedly that virtue is only an idea, and that ideas do not cause events or motivate actions anyhow. But denying the significance of ideas seems an odd strategy for Diggins's purpose, for it puts in doubt the status of the Lockean-Calvinist interpretation he defends no less than the civic republican interpretation he rejects.

Moreover, his sharp distinction between "words" and "deeds," between "reasons" and "motives," misses the sense in which political discourse constitutes political practice. It is one thing to show how key terms of political discourse change, something else to deny the significance of political speech as such. As Diggins is keenly aware, political traditions matter because they inform present political possibilities. The contemporary search for the moral resources of our tradition reflects the unsettled public philosophy by which we live.

MICHAEL J. SANDEL

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

have of ensuring that scarce goods and services go to the people who value them most.

Won't this confer unconscionable windfalls on the present tenants? Essentially no: just like the legal squatters in rent-controlled apartments, they are already enjoying the windfalls. Every evidence suggests that their fares for flights into and out of congested, capacity-constrained airports are already exactly what the traffic will bear.

We discovered at the Civil Aeronautics Board that the market clearly does some things much more efficiently and fairly than private or governmental rationing; the lesson has so far been lost on the FAA.

ALFRED E. KAHN
Former chairman, Civil Aeronautics Board

TRB, *from page 4*

ed some of the most frenzied lobbying were its proposals to end the deduction for state and local taxes and to wipe out a couple of ancient tax breaks for the oil and gas industry. Reagan held firm on state and local taxes. But he caved on oil and gas, where his revised plan reportedly will restore "at least two-thirds" of the threatened tax benefits.

The alarums about state and local taxes were tremendously exaggerated. Even in a high-tax state such as New York, most taxpayers don't itemize and won't be affected. Still, the benefits of this deduction go mainly to middle-class home owners, and the effect of wiping it out will be felt most strongly in the depressed industrial Northeast and Midwest. The oil and gas breaks, by contrast, mostly benefit rich people in the Sunbelt. By restoring unjustified loopholes for "independent" oil companies, Reagan perpetuates the fiction that little oil companies are owned by little people. In fact, the typical independent producer is far richer than shareholders of the major oil companies. A well that pumps only ten barrels a day—the cutoff for one break—produces revenue close to $100,000 a year.

At bottom, though, Treasury II is still a big improvement on the current tax system, in terms of both efficiency and fairness. Thus the Democrats' dilemma. If they torpedo tax reform, they will look like special-interest spoilsports. But if they support it, they will be handing Reagan a huge victory on a platter. The Reaganites see tax reform as a "populist" issue that could bring working-class people into the fold and make the Republicans the majority party.

But Reagan's revised tax reform is not nearly as "populist" as the original proposal. Thus the Democrats' opportunity. If they wish to take back the tax reform banner, Treasury I provides the ammunition. About one oil loophole Reagan would reopen—percentage depletion—Treasury I says that "half the benefits . . . accrue to only 90,000 taxpayers with adjusted gross incomes of over $75,000. This amounts to an average benefit of approximately $6,400. . . ." Of another—expensing of intangible drilling costs—Treasury I estimates that, "in 1986, 31,000 individuals with adjusted gross incomes over $100,000 would . . . receive an average benefit of approximately $28,000." And so on.

Representative Jack Kemp recently restored oil and gas breaks to his own tax plan. The other leading Republican presidential hopeful, Vice President Bush, who made his fortune in oil, reportedly met with Reagan to plead against even the watered-down reforms now proposed for that industry. Bob Packwood, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, already has raised $1.4 million this year for his next campaign from "real estate developers, oil company executives, securities brokers, lawyers, utility executives, and timber company officials," according to *The Washington Post*.

Will the Democrats grab this splendid political opportunity to portray themselves as the party of all the people and the Republicans as the party of rich special interests? In 1981, faced with a similar opportunity during the tax cut debate, they chose instead to engage the Republicans in a special-interest bidding war, for all the good it did them. This may be the Democrats' last chance. No bets from me that they'll seize it.

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BRIEF REVIEWS

DO LORD REMEMBER ME by Julius Lester (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 210 pp., $13.95)

Sitting at his desk one afternoon, poised to write his obituary, Reverend Joshua Smith gets muddled about the date of his birth: Was it 1900 or 1897? But as the rest of this deceptively simple and moving novel shows, there's nothing really the matter with his memory at all. The narrative floats on one decisive day—the day of his death—but it also dips back in time to fish out moments of faith, and loss of faith, from Reverend Smith's past.

In the memory that opens the book, young Joshua's father tells him of his great grandfather "back in slavery times," and passes on an important lesson: "The best sense you can learn is to watch people. You listenin' to me?" Julius Lester watches and listens closely as he sketches the arc of the reverend's life—his awakening to his vocation, and his growing doubt about the way he has lived his life in the white South. In one of the last memories, he sees a sit-in on TV and thinks of his son who's among those at the Woolworth counter. "A new song was being sung and its melody was freedom. Was he the only one who would remember the simple melody of survival?" At the novel's end, those two melodies have merged into a harmony for him.

THE SEXUAL POLITICS OF JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU by Joel Schwartz (University of Chicago Press, 196 pp., $17, $7.95 paper)

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's sexual obsessions rank as some of the greatest in French history, but in his political theory, sex is something of an inconvenience. By turns, Rousseau imagines human beings to be autonomous and self-sufficient (in the state of nature), and integrated into an ideal, all-encompassing state (in the civil society of *The Social Contract*). Neither scenario recognizes the importance of emotional and sexual ties between individuals.

Yet as Joel Schwartz shows in this remarkably clear and cogent work, Rousseau did not ignore these complications. He adapted his theories to include them, and in the process came to see sexual behavior as a prime agent of human politicization. "Sexuality," Schwartz writes, "is the bridge which links original human self-sufficiency with ultimate human political dependence." Sexual pairings form rudimentary political units in the state of nature; in a mature civil society, they provide a necessary intermediary between individuals and the state.

Schwartz argues his case with great sophistication, offering careful readings both of the familiar canon and of more obscure works like *Narcisse* and the *Botany*. What emerges is not only an admirably subtle anatomy of Rousseau's views, but a timely reminder: that sexual politics did not begin with the suffragettes and women's liberation, but has always been an inextricable part of politics itself.

LESS THAN ZERO by Bret Easton Ellis (Simon and Schuster, 183 pp., $15.95)

Clay is 18. He lives in L.A., and goes to college in New Hampshire. His parents are very rich. His friends are very beautiful, and they do all kinds of wonderful drugs. Everyone has sex, some of it really weird sex.

But life isn't so good for Clay. His tan has faded in the New Hampshire cold. His best friend from grade school is a homosexual prostitute. He's a little strung out on all the chemicals constantly coursing through his body. Nobody understands him—not his old girlfriend, not his psychiatrist, not even his parents, divorced of course.

Twenty-year-old Bret Easton Ellis's first novel paints a grim picture of the lives of L.A.'s overprivileged children. But who cares? Readers with a degree in pharmacology may find the chemical catalog diverting (marijuana, coke, Quaaludes, Valium, Nembutal, lithium, ether, acid, heroin, methadone, novocaine, Decadron, Celestone, and Percodan), but the rest of us probably prefer to read stories about people than about powders or pills. Written in the inarticulate style of a petulant suburban punk, this novel strains to capture the genuine despair in some rich kids' lives, but ends up only superficially reporting their tedious hedonism. Reading it is like watching MTV. Each of the brief, videoesque vignettes that make up the book hints at depths never explored. There's a glimpse of real feeling; then, click, it's onto the next episode of ennui: "As I pull onto Sunset I pass the billboard I saw this morning that reads 'Disappear Here' and I look away and kind of try to get it out of my mind."

THE POLITICAL THEORY OF THE FEDERALIST by David F. Epstein (University of Chicago Press, 234 pp., $22)

While it is a model of scholarly care and clarity, this study deserves an audience outside the academy, too. Our politics—even our politicians—are philosophically self-conscious these days. We refer, more than we used to, to the ideas and the texts of "the framers," and none are more important than the 85 essays, written with the haste of the journalist but with the rigor of the thinker, that Epstein explicates. If there is a book upon which America is based, *The Federalist* is it. Still, the precise standpoint of Madison, Hamilton, and Jay remains a subject of controversy. Some say that they are more or less unreconstructed liberals in the Lockean mold, providing principles of order for a society of autonomous and acquisitive individuals. Others argue that "Publius," as befits his name, owed more to the classical tradition of republican virtue, for which the public good stands above private ambitions. Epstein shows persuasively that both these themes figure in *The Federalist*. It turns out that our confusion about the grounds of American community (do we admire virtue or will?) may be found in our origins.

Epstein's book is a fine demonstration of just how much a close reading can accomplish, free of any flights of theory or fancy references. This old-fashioned confinement to the text establishes its conceptual coherence, no easy feat for a congeries of outsize newspaper columns composed by three men under the most intense personal, political, and philosophical strain. The conflicting pressures of psychology and economics, of passions and interests, are analyzed by Epstein with truly Talmudic precision. The reader is left to reflect that the theory of America, like its society, is distinguished by its capaciousness, by its amazing ability to find a place for all the legitimate demands that human association makes upon it.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Secrets and Sausages

ALMOST EXACTLY a year ago, Marty Peretz and I hovered over a pay phone at National Airport at ten o'clock on a warm spring night and learned that we had lost the bidding for *U.S. News & World Report*. After two months of hard work, losing was shattering. I suddenly understood why Pentagon contractors prefer no-bid deals. It turned out a few months later, however, that I'd be able to put all that knowledge I'd gleaned about *U.S. News* to some use. I was hired by Mort Zuckerman, the new owner, to help run the business—like a Northrop engineer jumping to General Dynamics. What's the difference between working at *The New Republic* and at *U.S. News*, a magazine with 20 times the circulation and 20 times the number of employees? The technical part is actually fairly similar—we use the same cajolery to sell advertising and the same embarrassing gimmickry to sell subscriptions. The cultural part is not. *U.S. News* is a big place; people don't hang around the halls and talk about the tax bill or the Rumanian succession. There is also the feeling that everyone is watching. Until the ABC and Metromedia deals came along, the purchase of *U.S. News* was the biggest story in journalism. "So, what are you guys going to do with *U.S. News*?" is the question I've been hearing for the past eight months. I wish I were free to say. At this point, the blunt answer is, "None of your business." The polite answer is, "We have an excellent magazine right now without any major changes, and anything we do will be evolutionary and maintain the strengths of the magazine," etc., etc. Stay tuned.

ACTUALLY, there have been a lot of changes at *U.S. News* in the past eight months—mainly in personnel. The chief executive officer, chief financial officer, publisher, and editor have all departed, with various degrees of willingness. The editor, Marvin Stone, a wise and kind man who had been at the magazine for 25 years, decided to retire from journalism and to go to work for the federal government. (Marvin has the curiously old-fashioned idea that successful people owe their country something.) He was honored a few months ago at a dinner. "I've been in Washington a long time," Stone said. "It was a very different city when I got here. You used to find Velveeta cheese in the gourmet section of the supermarket." There were laughs, but more important, a lot of people—including three at my table—took out note pads and wrote the joke down so they could use it later themselves. Marvin was right: Washington has changed. Not only has it grown more sophisticated, with gourmet sections devoted to goat cheese and morels and kiwi instead of Velveeta. It's become the kind of town where journalists, lobbyists, and lawyers whip out their pads to jot down jokes they can use later in their own speeches, or on the phone the next day with clients. There's something chilling in this lack of spontaneity. I'm reminded of Daniel Boorstin's great book of 20 years ago, *The Image*, in which he argues that political reality has been supplanted by "pseudo-events," like press conferences and wreath-laying ceremonies at Bitburg. His metaphor is a woman wheeling her baby through a park. A man stops the carriage and looks inside. "What a beautiful baby!" he says. "Oh," says the mother, "that's nothing. You should see his picture."

SPEAKING OF ILLUSION, consider the congratulations heaped on the governor of Maryland for calmly and adeptly handling a run on several of the state's savings and loan associations. What he did was limit withdrawals from all of the state's nonfederally insured S&Ls to $1,000 per account per month and to get the legislature and the feds to hasten the process that will provide almost all of the state's S&Ls with federal insurance. In other words, the depositors have been bailed out. But why? Depositors in institutions backed by the Maryland Saving-Shares Insurance Corporation rather than by the feds received far higher interest rates on savings—as much as 25 percent more. A few weeks ago, you could get 11 percent for a one-year CD at First Maryland Savings, an MSSIC institution, versus nine percent for the same CD at Columbia First Savings, which is insured by FSLIC. Depositors in MSSIC-insured S&Ls were accepting higher risk to get higher yields. Now it turns out the risk was real. So the solution is to eliminate it entirely (without, of course, taking away all the extra interest that MSSIC depositors have earned over the past several years). The market in the age of Reagan seems to have rewards but no punishments.

THE OTHER NIGHT I watched Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* for the first time. Now that's how to treat a run on a bank! Jimmy Stewart, who manages a building and loan (read S&L), is about to go on his honeymoon with Donna Reed when he learns that depositors are lining up to withdraw their money. He hustles back and makes a great speech, the theme of which is community. When Mr. Brown demands, "Where is my money?" Stewart answers that it's in Mrs. Green's house. It's tied up in assets that help everyone. Brown nods and relents. This sort of appeal, alas, won't work today. Money deposited in Maryland S&Ls rarely is put to work directly as local mortgages. More often, it goes into such vehicles as reverse repos and Eurobonds. Jimmy Stewart never would have been able to stop the run on Old Court Savings & Loan in Baltimore.

THIS IS a beautiful city, but many people who live here find it a strangely cold and shallow one. "Washington has no sausages," a friend said once. That's a good description—a city without grease and garlic and gristle. (You can, however, find breakfast links.) Something else about Washington: the people who live here seem more obsessed with money than people in other cities. This is an observation that is both paradoxical and impossible to prove, but I'm convinced it's true. Washington is supposed to be a city in which everyone's goal is power—influence over policy. I don't think that's quite right. Washington instead is a city in which everyone's goal is to be paid large amounts of money to influence policy for one's clients. Money, not power, is Washington's dirty little secret.

J.K.G.

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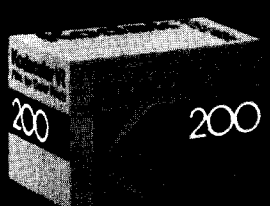
200 mm at 1/60 sec at f/32

How to reach the gold standard.



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